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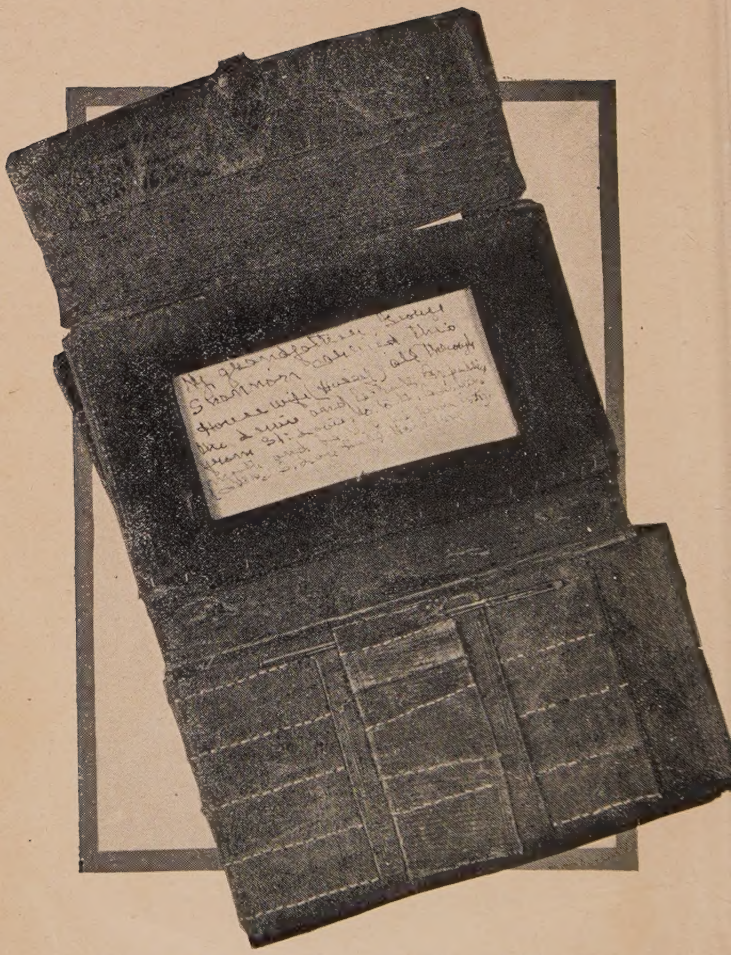

This is a photograph of the housewife carried by George Shannon, great-grandfather of Anne Shannon Monroe, throughout the Lewis and Clark expedition. It was wet in the waters of the Columbia and many other rivers on that long wilderness trek, but survived, to be treasured, first by his daughter, Jane Shannon, then by her daughter, Sarah Louise Hall, and then by her daughter, Anne Shannon Monroe. It is now in the care of the Historical Society of Portland, Oregon. (1927)

The WORLD I SAW

By

ANNE SHANNON MONROE

Garden City, New York
DOUBLEDAY, DORAN & COMPANY, INC.
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To my mother
—born SARAH LOUISE HALL—
the daughter of the daughter of George Shannon,
known as
"the boy explorer of the Lewis and Clark expedition":
my most eager reader and
most severe critic.

A. S. M.

THE WORLD I SAW

A curious little clam pushed his shell just as wide open as he could, thrust his neck just as far up as it would go, and exclaimed:

"Why, it's a world of sunny air, and gulls flying, and children laughing, and young people making love, and old people at rest on benches—and—and—just everything!"

"Nonsense!" said his companion, drawing his neck clear inside and closing his shell tightly. "It's a world of sea and sand."

And when they went down into the deeper wet again, and told the other clams what the world was like, they could never agree.

"Well, anyway," persisted the first little clam, "that's the world *I* saw."

THE WORLD I SAW

THE WORLD I SAW

CHAPTER I

One day in midwinter Papa came home from the office in a blustery snowstorm, and said: "We're going West! Not another winter in this climate." And by the positive way in which he said it we knew this time it was true. Mamma stared speechless, but we children ran shouting the news all over the neighbourhood: "We're going West! We're going West! Right away, we're going West!"

It was one of the long dreams, coming down to us, I think, from our great-grandfather, George Shannon, who was the boy explorer of the Lewis and Clark expedition—that romantic dream of "the West." A dream fed by stories told to us in the long summer twilight. For we had a grandmother—his daughter—who came to spend the summers with us—a very lovely old lady in a lace cap—and we would gather about her in the blue haze of a summer evening in Missouri, on the old Colonial porch, and while watching the fireflies snap their little glow lanterns on and off in the blue grass everywhere, listen to her stories of her father, stories he had told her when she was a little girl, about that first great trek out through the old Oregon country. I think she must have been living in

a dream world of her own, those days, for her stories came in pictures, and wondrous colours, all purple and blue and gold, till the whole vast Oregon country lay before me as a land of purple mountains all mystery filled, deep and dark and sombre, and wide tawny plains that rolled on endlessly, with a solitary rider, maybe, seen off against the far horizon. It was all colour and beauty and romance. The mad, tumbling mountain torrents were real things to me, and the great Columbia River, between its bold, rocky shores, with wild white swans flying high above it, and sculptured blue herons along its banks or perched on floating pieces of débris.

And always I could see the little band of explorers pushing their way on and on through the wilderness lands, and always I could see my great-grandfather—only sixteen—Irish, impetuous, dashing into things, a fearless hunter, getting lost, but giving a good account of himself just the same. There were stories of his becoming separated from the party and running out of ammunition, and using hard little pieces of wood for bullets, and bringing down his game. But I always loved best the story of the time he was lost—he had gone hunting—and, after being three days without food, stumbled, half famished, into an old squaw's wigwam, and the old squaw, hunching to her feet, went to work immediately to make him an ash cake. How he watched her as she pounded, and moulded, and baked, hardly able to restrain himself from snatching the half-done cake from the fire and devouring it. And then, at last, she took it out of the ashes and carefully brushed it off, but, as she handed it to him, she spat on it.

Always, he had said, he had known that this was done out of kindness, to keep him from eating more than he just had to. He knew this was the kindly intent, because in every other thing she was kindness itself and helped him to find his way back to his party.

And so we lived the old trek all over again under Grandmother's magic telling, following the ragged band of explorers through to the Pacific Ocean, and seeing them build there the salt cairn for boiling out sea water. It was especially vivid, some way, that old salt cairn.

"And maybe it's there still," Grandmother would say, "and maybe you children will go out to the Pacific coast some day and see it with your very own eyes." Always she sighed over this, for she had wanted to go; it had been her girlhood's dream; and now she was too old. "But you are young," she would add; "everything is before you."

And now we were going; actually going! For Papa left right away with several other men of our town who had become interested, with the completion of the Northern Pacific railroad through to the coast. They were to find a location—and send for their families. Papa chose Yakima, a new little town started by the railroad, in Washington; and wrote for us to come at once.

Packing was the great thing. What would we take? What leave? "Charter a car," Papa wrote, "and ship everything, for it will be pioneering out here."

So all the old furniture went, even the desk of cherry wood that had been Great-grandfather's, and the bookcase that had been Great-great-grandfather's; and all the books—stacks and stacks of books, boxes and bar-

rels of books, books in which the s's were all f's, yellowed and brown-streaked, and the leaves tight together from being squeezed into their places on shelves for so many generations, and on the fly leaves inscriptions in old-fashioned, stately writing.

They smelled musty and queer . . . I couldn't see why Mamma wanted them to go, but she did. It seemed the book packing would never be done, for Mamma would open a book, linger over the inscription, browse through it, then close it with a sigh, only to open another and browse some more. Mamma's passion was books. She had always wanted to be an archæologist—she would almost lose her breath over an account of some new discovery of remains of an earlier civilization found buried in the earth. But she couldn't go digging and exploring herself—there were the seven children—so the books had to do.

She wasn't a bit sure about this thing of going West, pulling up stakes and leaving everyone she had always known, and the relatives. "Anyway, I'll have my books," she said.

Papa, too, had especially mentioned the books. "Bring them all, even the children's," he had written; so we gathered up from playhouse and grape arbour and attic all our precious books; all the old bound volumes of *St. Nicholas* which we had from the very first issue, Papa having subscribed before any of us were born, thinking he would some day have children and they would love it. And they did. Not a book was left.

Black George, Papa's stable man, was solemnly in the offing, working badly. He had been with us always.

At last he called my older sister aside: "Mis' Wese," he whispered, "take me along, honey, an' I promise you you won't never hafto wash no dishes so long as you lives."

He had already importuned Mamma. So Wese wrote Papa about it. George wanted to go West with us, she wrote Papa, he was almost *pale* from wanting to go, and kind of shivery and trembly; she guessed he would just *have* to go.

But Papa wrote back there were no Negroes in Yakima, and George would die of loneliness. "Won't I have you-all?" George demanded, blinking hard, when Wese gave him Papa's message.

"Here, George," Mamma called, briskly, "take this ham liquor home with you; and you might as well take that barrel of apples and that five-gallon crock of peach butter." For the cellar was being emptied. George slumped away for his wheelbarrow. Poor George, he had used his biggest bribe; for when the house was filled with guests, Wese and I had to help wash dishes —the bane of our lives!

Everyone was at the station to see us off; hundreds of people, all shouting messages over each other's heads and putting farewell gifts into our hands. "Write, now—don't forget," it would be; and "Maybe we'll be out there ourselves by another year"; "Tell the doctor he'll never know how we miss him"; "Don't let the Indians get you," and "Come back, oh, do come back!" . . . Then the train creaked into motion, the waving handkerchiefs faded to a blur, and we were on our way—Mamma and her seven children.

When we couldn't see them any more, I began to

realize; grew serious and silent. . . . All those I had played with always, all those mothers who had been second mothers to me when there were hurts or hunger, all the "yards" I'd raced about in, all the trees I'd climbed—and suddenly I remembered the great old elm tree in our front yard that had been "base" always—the oldest and tallest tree in the county, a landmark from every direction—and I sprang up to run back to the tree, and collapsed, crying, in my corner.

It was hard for Mamma. She knew, of course, we would never go back—not to live. We were a West-going family. Both her ancestors and Papa's had been Virginians, Scotch-Irish, there in time to fight through the Revolution; before that, some of them had been given large grants in Maryland and had been knighted. But after the Revolution they had started the westward trek; first stopping in Ohio and Kentucky, then Missouri; and now the last trek was on. . . .

No, they would never go back. Old habits, old associations, old traditions—all were broken up. And Mamma loved the established order. She didn't like changes. She loved her friends. She loved the dignity of family connections. She loved entertaining—her "dinings" were famous in our old town. She loved doing things on a lavish scale, as her father had done them before her—her father, who had stood by the Union through the Civil War, gaining thereby the enmity of his neighbours, who had lost a son in the Southern cause, who had died more of a broken heart than a broken body. Papa, though only seventeen, had been swept into the Southern cause with his entire college, had fought through the four years and carried a

deep scar from Shiloh, and a cane that he needed. It wasn't just to be fashionable, though always, when I saw him out anywhere, I felt a thrill of pride as I thought, "That's my father." He always looked so distinguished.

Presently I heard Mamma's voice: "And just think," she was saying, though she was having a hard time to hold the tears back, "we'll see the great Columbia River with its bold, rocky shores and white swans flying above it, just as your great-grandfather saw it when he was a boy. Rivers don't change much. And here's the very housewife—they called it 'hoos-sif' in those days—that he carried throughout the entire journey, with a bodkin that went with him on the whole trip. It was wet many times in the waters of the Columbia, when rafts upset. His mother had given it to him as a good-bye present when he went away to college that autumn, and he never parted with it. My mother gave it to me."

She let us all take it in our hands, examine the worn old red and green leather, smell the old wet-leather smell of it. This brought it all awfully close, some way.

"Gee," said my brother Andrew, a misty look in his large brown eyes, "I hope there are Indians now."

"Well, I hope there are *not,*" said Wese, who always ran and stuck her head under a feather bed when it thundered.

"But Papa *said* there were Indians," said one of the little girls.

" 'Course he did," said another, and that settled it.

"Let's talk some more about Great-grandfather," I demanded.

"Anne, do put your hair out of your eyes, and straighten up your shoulders," said Mamma.

I flung back the offending hair.

"The main thing I want you all to remember about your great-grandfather now that we're going pioneering," said Mamma, "is that, after all that wilderness adventure, and being appointed by the President to make a second trip, returning the Indians that Lewis and Clark had carried East with them, and then assisting for an entire year on the Journals, supplying many missing data—for he was a born nature lover and naturalist, and he may have observed many things in plant life that the older men overlooked—after all that, and being famous as the 'boy explorer,' he had to go back to college just the same. His mother required it. I have always thought she must have been a remarkable woman. For she was left a widow in Ohio—when Ohio was a wilderness—with eight children to educate, six sons and two daughters, and she put all her sons through Transylvania College; and they all proved worthy of it, becoming prominent lawyers and judges, and, later, governors of states and territories, and Congressmen and ministers to foreign ports; and one, David, was a poet as well as a lawyer."

Here she looked at me, for I was the scribbler of the family.

"Didn't the girls do anything interesting?" I asked.

"They were great readers and fine conversationalists, and they both married good men and had large families. They were beautiful women," she added, "the pure Irish type, with blue eyes and dark curly hair and very high colour."

Mamma now turned to her book. It was Blaine's *Twenty Years in Congress,* big and solemn and calf-bound. She would have five delectable days undisturbed by household cares.

"If only I didn't belong to such a wonderful family," said little Billy with a huge sigh as the fruit vender came by, "I could have a tray and go through the train selling peanuts and oranges."

"You don't," I comforted him, "not all over, just on Mamma's side."

Mamma looked up severely from Blaine's *Twenty Years.*

"Never doubt the worth of the blood that is in you," she said. "If you are failures, you have only yourselves to blame."

I guess it was Mamma's Virginia ancestry that made "blood" seem so important to her. Billy sighed again, but subsided.

Mamma was a very impressive mother; always, she was beautifully groomed, with a cameo brooch fastening the lace at her throat. This brooch had a history, too. It was one of the stories: a Shannon aunt gave her handsomer jewels to other nieces; but Mamma had always loved this particular brooch, so the aunt had called her to her bedside as she lay dying, and had presented it to her, and asked her to wear it always; and Mamma always had. Mamma was beautiful, too, like the other Shannon women, only she had black eyes instead of blue. Something besides Shannon had entered in. We children were not handsome—something besides Shannon had entered into us, too. But we were all glad we were Monroes.

CHAPTER II

The thrilling thing about the trip was the sense of rediscovery. Everything was just as I had expected it to be: there were the wide tawny plains, and there were the deep dark mountains, and there was the great Columbia, just as I had pictured it always. Nothing seemed new or surprising. I'd find myself nodding, and saying, quite to myself, "Yes, there they are, the pinnacles and peaks and everything, just as Great-grandfather said." So vivid had been that first picturing that nothing was a surprise, following the old trek.

But Yakima—that was the surprise! Just a little wind-swept station in the midst of a great wide valley, all sagebrush and sand, and people crowding about to see the train come in, or to welcome families. People in dust-coloured clothes holding on to wide hats, for it was in March and the wind was howling; bronzed, jolly men calling out to one another, calling to Papa, "Hello, Doc—I see your family's come; wish mine had." Then hurrying on; jolly, sunburned men with a free-and-easy air about them that made you like them immediately.

And Papa looked so fine, all new and hopeful and sunburned. He had thick black hair, and a close-cropped black moustache, and large lovely gray eyes. Papa wasn't free-and-easy; he was quiet and reserved in his manner, but all the free-and-easy people liked him.

And there were Indians. Papa hadn't fooled us. Indians everywhere along the street, crouched in doorways, sunning, in blankets and long black braids, with their papooses swung over their backs or leaning beside them against the wall. They looked at us, blinking their small watery eyes, as if they didn't see us, just saw a landscape on to which we had come, like a passing cloud, to go again soon. But we stared at them.

But better than all else was the country. A brand-new country that never had been used before by anybody but cattle men and Indians. A sagebrush country with a pungent odour and a high, clear blue sky, and a sort of goldenness in the air, all winey and light—so very light. That was the thing you noticed most, the lightness. And there were ponies to ride—cayuses. Papa said first thing, as he was helping us off the train, that we could all have a pony apiece. He was so very glad to see us. He had the baby in his arms. He always called her "Dolly" and loved her best of all. But then, he always loved his baby best, I think. I can remember his walking up and down on the long porch in Missouri with me in his arms and singing "Annie Laurie" to me till I thought it was my song, made up for just me. The baby had almost forgotten Papa and had to get acquainted all over again.

"Come on," he said, "the house isn't far away. An expressman will bring the baggage."

So we all walked along together, all of us clinging to Papa like bees on a bough.

"But what about schools?" Mamma asked in rising alarm as she looked about at the tiny town in the midst of the great wide valley.

"They'll come," said Papa. "Everything will come. But, anyway, I want the children to live in the open and grow rugged—first." He went on to tell how fast the town was growing, though there were only four hundred people in it now. But new ones were coming in on every train—such a splendid class of people, and they were all planning country homes and buying land; and of course they would build good schools.

But I didn't want the town to grow. It was just right—the cunningest town! Like a Noah's Ark toy town, with little houses set lightly on the ground as if they didn't matter a bit, anyhow, and if anything happened to destroy one like a cyclone—you could just make another in a few hours and no fuss about it. Nothing at all looked fixed or stable. Just a casual sort of a town that had alighted, someway, there in the middle of the valley. And all around the valley were low-lying foothills, tawny and smooth, like great elephants that might hump up their backs any moment and rise and move on. And beyond the tawny foothills lay purple mountain ranges, ringing the valley in like a huge bowl. And still farther away beyond the purple rim was Mount Adams, all snowy white, with a pink cloud cap hovering above it, from the steam that rose constantly from its crater. And everywhere over the floor of the valley there were sagebrush and sand. Piles and piles and drifts and drifts of sand. And you could lie in it, and roll in it, and dig in it. And at night, Papa said, the wind came up and blew it all away, and when you went out to find the sand you'd played in the day before, it wasn't there at all, but miles down the valley

on someone else's land. And the sun shone all the time.

"Do look at that sunset!" said Mamma.

"It's like that every night," said Papa, showing off his town. "A gorgeous sweep of colour that lights up the whole great valley like a fire. When I was a little boy," he went on, turning to his children, "I thought mountains were like rows of turned-over teacups. I had never pictured them as they are, great rugged wrinkles of earth filled with mystery and colour."

Papa had never talked much about when he was a little boy, and never at all about the war where he got his scar and his cane. He was silent, generally, suffering from nerves and rheumatism—things the war had done to him. It was wonderful to have him like this, telling us things. The new West promised wonders.

Our house was funny, just a box house, set on top of the ground without a foundation or cellar, and lined with cloth and paper. When the wind blew, you could see it running between the lining and the boards like something alive. The cloth and paper didn't stick very well. And the house rocked in the wind. But it wouldn't fall down, because, as Papa said, it was already down. I liked it. It made a house not matter so very much. Made you feel free, like birds and squirrels.

But immediately we planned to build. For the sand came through all the cracks and crannies, and no matter how well you swept it out one day, it was back the next, and everything was all over dust. Great dust storms swept up the valley in a wall. When you saw one coming, you ran into the house, but they never did any real harm. And there were whirlwinds, tall spirals

of dust. You would watch a bit of paper that had been caught up in one swept around and up and around and up till you could see it 'way at the top. I loved the walls of dust, but the whirlwinds were more exciting because of the bit of paper.

CHAPTER III

We hardly had the carpets down before people began to call. And they all began talking first thing about the dust, and the best way to keep it down, and the best colours to wear so it wouldn't show. The women all wore sand-coloured clothes, and the men wore rangey, drab-looking suits, with linen dusters over them. All the houses were like ours, thrown up in a hurry, just to do till better ones could be built. So they all had the same problems. But everything would be different, they repeated, like a lesson they'd learned, just as soon as irrigation covered the valley and crops were planted to hold the soil down. It was going to be a wonderful country, because all you had to do was to plant things and turn on the water, and there was an abundance of water. It would be a veritable valley of the Nile. No matter what subject was started, a conversation always ended with the country. Everybody was filled up with it: soil, water, irrigation, country homes, plans for the future. It was just the most *future* place. Engineers were out in the dust and the sun running lines all the time, coming in at night with sweaty, hard-driven teams, and going about in khaki and wide hats looking secretive and important. Mystery was steadily in the air, as to "lower ditches" and "higher ditches," and land that would come under the ditch and land that wouldn't. And there were slippings away into the

mountains to find lakes that would become reservoirs for canals, and wise looks and nods and whispers.

Get land, everybody said; get good land if you can, but get land. It was a fire burning in every breast. It was as if these first comers had discovered a gold mine and pretty soon the secret would be out, and everybody in the world would come flocking in and fill up the valley, and it was up to those on the spot to get control of all they could before this happened.

And the strange part was that these people were not soil people at all, but editors, doctors, lawyers, clergymen—city-bred, as a rule, people who had heard the call of the new country, and had followed the new railroad as we had. There were a good many Europeans, too: Scotch, who had come for the sheep; English, who were taking large tracts and making great country estates; and other Britishers, who had left home for the good of their country, it was whispered —remittance men—but here everybody knew them and liked them, and seemed glad that their own country didn't want them any more. The man who brought our milk each evening was an English lord, helping out his slim income with a milk route. He was charming, and as he poured the milk in the shiny new milk pans Mamma had ready, he would discuss with her all sorts of literary matters—"Yes, I was in Vienna that winter with my tutor; that was the winter the Gilbert and Sullivan operas were first produced . . ." Casual, like that, about thrilling things—there on the kitchen porch over the milk pans.

Nobody at all seemed in his usual position, or doing the things usual to his life, but something altogether

different; and each was amused, vastly amused, when not wildly excited. It was almost as if a great play were being put on, and the players taking parts so different from their characters: servants being great ladies, and great ladies playing servant, and everything all sort of topsy turvy, and everybody jolly about it. As if a string might be suddenly pulled and everybody snatched back into staidness and regularity; but now, anyway, they were just turned loose and having a good time!

Another fire that burned in them was town loyalty; Yakima was only two years old, but even so there were men ready to die for it. They were furious over another town starting up only forty miles away—Ellensburg. In all that great ocean of space there was room for but one town, and that had to be Yakima. So, whatever Yakima had that was bad, Ellensburg had a thousand times worse; whatever Yakima had that was good, Ellensburg had not at all. When the wind would begin to blow, and the guests sunning in a row in front of the old Frenchman's hotel would seize their hats and their chairs and dash inside under cover, then would the old Frenchman, expanding his chest with satisfaction, exclaim, "My Goddy, but he blow like hell in Ellensburg!"

And some way, you just sort of believed it did.

When ladies called, if they brought their daughters, Wese and I had to go in and help entertain them. Wese liked this, but I didn't. Wese had always loved company and had helped Mamma since she was big enough to reach up to the door knob and let guests in. She was responsible and grown-up in her ways, and

had always been called precocious, doing wonderfully in school, and reading the classics before she was ten. She was small with beautiful fair curly hair, and gray eyes like Papa's, and a fair complexion, like the Shannons. Papa was very proud of her and always said she had a fine mind. He wasn't so proud of me. He had had to bribe me with a big round silver dollar to read my first book through—at eight: a terrible age to have reached without having developed a taste for good literature. But he liked me, anyhow.

When company came, I always ran if I could. "I have another little daughter," I remember hearing Mamma say, once, back in Missouri, to visitors she was showing over her garden, with Wese helping. But I had seen them coming, and had climbed up into the grape arbour, and at that moment was peering down on them through the screen of green leaves. Another time when I had been missing, I crawled out, when the visitors had gone, from the top shelf of the fruit closet, where I had hidden among the jams and jellies. And now, though I was growing up and had to do it, I hated having to come into the parlour and be introduced in Mamma's very formal way; then sit and talk to a girl, with kid gloves on whom I didn't know. I think I was the shyest girl that ever lived, for there was no length to which I wouldn't go, to escape these presentations. All I could ever think of to do afterward was to open the photograph album and show the c[illegible] r the old friends in Missouri, and all of us when w[illegible]ere babies, and Papa and Mamma when they were first [illegible]arried—and didn't they look *funny!*

We[illegible]e had no such trouble; she just talked along

sensibly and easily of everything, and looked daggers at me when I wriggled and squirmed and darted glances toward the rear door as if I might dash out at any moment. Andrew could go fishing or riding to his heart's content; and the two little girls and Billy and the baby could play in the sand all day; but I was in that intermediate stage at which I had to come in and act grown-up at times; and I loathed it.

But right away I found friends among the daughters who came with their mothers. There was Zona, whose father, Colonel Howlett, was receiver at the land office—a very brilliant, handsome man with flowing whiskers and a Southern manner, who had been associated with Colonel Henry Watterson in Louisville. Her mother was a frail little woman, almost an invalid, but she had a scintillating mind, Mamma said; and they too had many books. But principally they had Zona, and she loved to ride. Like me, she was rather overgrown, and she wasn't so particular about sitting up straight, and she had black eyes and long black braids. My braids weren't black but a golden brown, almost tawny. But they flopped up and down on my shoulders just as hard when I rode, and they didn't show the dust so badly, so I was rather perky about them, considering them a better colour for the country.

Immediately Zona and I were riding everywhere together. I would saddle my horse—Papa got us some real saddle horses, as the cayuses were not very dependable—and call for Zona, and away we would dash out of town through the nice smelly sagebrush to the wildest, weirdest places we could find. We'd go 'way out to the Natches Gap where there were Indian paint-

ings no telling how many centuries old, on the rocks, scaring up, as we went, jack rabbits, and sage hens, and coyotes; and sometimes we'd come upon a great rattlesnake coiled by the roadside, making our horses shudder and shrink back; and we'd dismount and slip up on it, cautiously, and watch its quick-darting tongue warning us not to come too near—and we wouldn't. Wild flowers were everywhere now, and we brought home arms full for Mamma to botanize—such hundreds of varieties! And other times we'd visit old Indian battlefields and, getting down off our horses, look for arrowheads, and often we found half-buried pieces of Indian pottery. Always we came home with treasure.

And then I found another friend, Dottie. Dottie belonged to one of the English families of title, and she was to inherit a title and estates in England and be a great lady and live in great ancestral halls, but just now she was only funny Dottie with her flaxen braids, and her snubby little nose forever peeling from sunburn, and her forehead screwed up in a frown, and her pockets full of currants or pickles. She carried them in a baking-powder can, stuffed in her generous blue cotton blouse pockets, handy for refreshment on her dusty rides.

But when she came to call, it was in considerable state, driving up with her mother from their ranch in a low phaëton, with a fat, white, gentle, old driving horse. She got out and came in with her mother's card to know if we were at home. We were. So she went back and returned with her mother. We weren't used to so much ceremony and were quite awed.

The mother was a slender, frail-looking, dark-haired woman in the quaintest, most old-fashioned clothes—draperies and lace hanging about her everywhere, and queer jewellery of jet and pearls; and she had the most tragic dark eyes. We soon heard her story from others: she was a cousin of Lord Lytton; she had eloped with an Irish army officer in her youth, and had been cut off from her family for it. They had wandered all over the world and had at last settled down in the Yakima valley, where they lived, somewhat precariously, on the things they raised and sold. She was a woman of the very highest culture, but now she must cook the meals, and put up fruit, and direct Dottie's education, trying to prepare her for the dignified station she was destined to fill—for it seems the family had not cut Dottie off; she was to inherit just the same.

Dottie, spirited and energetic, did the marketing, delivering fruits and vegetables to back doors; but in all social matters she was held strictly to the formalities. And these were not so easy for Dottie.

That day of the first call, left to Wese and me, she scraped her foot along the floor—I think she was fourteen, and rather overgrown—and flushed up under her sunburn with each remark Wese made, till I finally blurted out, "Can you ride?"

Could she ride! If there was anyone in the whole valley, or all the neighbouring valleys, or Ellensburg, or anywhere, who could outride her, well, she'd like to meet them, that was all! After that we had no more difficulties.

And how Dottie rode! She would come tearing into

town as if she were after the doctor, and much of the time she was, for her mother had heart attacks, and my father became her doctor. Papa was very much in sympathy with the poor lady and her immediate problem, though he couldn't help her solve it in the way she wished. Her problem was that Dottie was growing up; and how in the world was she to prepare her on a Yakima ranch for the station she was some day to occupy? And the Irish Captain, not being impressed with the importance of the matter, would not make the effort to raise the money to send Dottie away to school where she would be properly prepared for the duties of her coming high station. Now—Dottie's mother argued—if she should die, the Captain would have no other course, for what else could he do with Dottie? So she begged Papa not to bring her out of her heart attacks, but kindly to let her die—all for Dottie's good. "My beautiful sister in England, when she comes to receive the child—oh, she will be so ashamed of her," she would moan.

"No one could be ashamed of Dottie," Papa would say. "Such a fine, healthy, wholesome girl."

"Oh, but, Doctor, Doctor, you don't understand," she would cry, wringing her thin, blue-veined hands. "Think of her position! And my sister is so regal looking, and she has such a manner."

But Dottie had a manner, too. She arranged a party for us—a very grand party: we were to go on our horses for a visit to the Kerrs over in the Moxee valley. The Kerrs were wealthy Scotch people who were developing a great estate on old country lines, with blooded stock, and fields and pastures, and irri-

gated crops of all kinds. Already it was a show place of the country. But the interesting thing to Dottie was that there were children, several of them, and a young aunt from Scotland, who was very beautiful and had been presented at court, and everything. She was now a visitor there. Mrs. Kerr was a sister of Alexander Graham Bell, of Bell Telephone fame. She had invited Dottie to bring her new friends over to see them.

Dottie was tremendously impressed with her responsibility as hostess, and frightened half to death lest she do something wrong. Her mother had held the lovely Miss Kerr up to her as a model, and she wanted to make no mistakes.

We set off early on our horses, for it was a long ride, some nine or ten miles. In the midst of a brisk gallop, Dottie suddenly called a halt and reined in.

"We've got to rehearse the introductions," she said, almost breathlessly. "We've just got to, so we won't make any mistakes when the time comes. Now, Wese, I'm to introduce you first, because you're the oldest; and, Anne, you're to stay back—there, pull your horse back! Now, I'm introducing Wese: Miss Kerr, may I present Miss Monroe, and Miss Anne Monroe. Make your bow, Anne!"

A bow on horseback in a dusty road with a horse pawing to be off was not easily achieved—that is, with all the dignity Dottie demanded for the occasion. She was dubious about its effectiveness. "And if you'll only remember to stay back," she repeated, her forehead all screwed up in anxiety. "If I should get you and Wese all mixed up and introduce you first and Mother should ever hear of it, she'd have a heart attack right away!"

"It's Carl," I said. I was riding one of Papa's big saddle horses that day. "He won't stay back, ever!"

"Then change horses with Wese."

Then and there we got down in the dusty road and changed horses; and mounting once more, galloped on.

Three times before we reached the Kerr place Dottie demanded a rehearsal, each time more nervous over the ordeal, more fearful that something would go wrong. At the great gate leading into the estate, she put us through our paces for the last time. Even Wese and I began to feel uneasy, especially when we saw, at the end of the long driveway, a great creamy pile of a house flanked by many smaller buildings. It was very imposing.

"All together, now," ordered Dottie, *"let's race to the door."*

And leaning to her mount's neck, in the Indian fashion in which she always rode, she spurred, and whirled off in a cloud of yellow dust, Wese and I dashing after her as hard as ever we could. Pulling up, we slid to the ground like cowboys.

And there was the lovely Miss Kerr coming to meet us—a pretty, fair, Scotch girl in a black riding habit, her mount nearby held by a uniformed groom who came for our horses, too. And she took our hands all at once, and said in a joyous, rapid little way: "How jolly, Dottie! And this one's Wese, I know, for you said she was fair; and this one's Anne, the tanned one with the dark eyes. Shall we ride over the ranch, now, and see the new colts and calves before lunch? Pickle and Balfour are waiting for us down in the big pasture."

But nothing like this would do for Dottie. Drawing stiffly back from the warm welcome, she proceeded with all dignity: "Miss Kerr, may I present Miss Monroe —and Miss Anne Monroe?"

"Oh, how do you do, Miss Monroe—and Miss Anne," said the delightful Miss Kerr, with a charming little laugh. "And now that we are all quite properly introduced, Dottie, shall we go at once and find the others?"

Dottie nodded a quick consent and sprang into her saddle. A groom's help was beneath her notice. She was quite happy now, the usual gay-hearted Dottie, all restraint gone. The ordeal was over and she had made no mistakes. But my sister was red with mortification. She wanted to shake Dottie. She was sure Miss Kerr was laughing at us.

But even her ever-sensitive spirit recovered as we rode, at a leisurely gait, over the great ranch, Miss Kerr calling blithely to the dogs that were at our heels, to the calves and the colts and the young heifers, and even to the great old lowering-headed bulls, saying, "Hello, bully, bully, bully"—which Wese and I thought very strange for a lovely young lady who had been presented at court, for we had always been taught that "bull" wasn't a nice word to say. We would look at each other and wonder how it could be, but everything was so very delightful that we couldn't criticize.

We found Balfour, a slim, sandy-haired boy, the one who, not so terribly many years later, became a famous artist and married Mary Sigsbee, whose father was Captain Sigsbee of the *Maine* fame; and "Pickle," such a pretty little girl with black hair and white,

white skin and freckles across her cunning little nose—and who, not so terribly many years later, died doing settlement work in a New York slum. But now, they were just young and happy in the deep lush grass on their shiny-coated horses, with everything smelling so fresh and sweet, and all life spread so bountifully about them. "Not a sour pickle," the lovely Miss Kerr had added, introducing the little girl, "but a sweet pickle." She was so very gracious about everything.

After we had seen the great alfalfa fields, and the blooded herds, and the various "pet" animals, then we returned to the house for lunch. Such a delicious lunch! Great bowls of juicy blackberries freshly gathered from the vines, and clotted cream, and new cheese made on the ranch, and other things that seemed just a little fresher and nicer than the same things ever tasted anywhere else. And then we all went into the music room and Miss Kerr sang for us, "The Campbells are coming, O-ho, O-ho," and other Scotch songs, till the great room seemed filled with melody and sentiment, and I thought Scotch people must be the very nicest in all the world. And I must have said something of the kind, won by the music out of all shyness, for Miss Kerr said, "You have a good Scotch name yourself, my dear; you must be of Scotch origin."

"Yes," I told her, "all that isn't Irish is Scotch. The Shannons are Irish."

"Of course," said Miss Kerr.

"I'm Irish, too," put in Dottie, "all that isn't English."

"Indeed you are," said Miss Kerr, "and now as we were all originally Irish, or Scotch, or English, suppose

we all drink together to the dear old country, we who are now of the dear new."

She turned to a tray of raspberry vinegar the butler had brought in and took up a glass, and said we must have a stirrup cup before starting on the long ride back. We drank: and I felt very warm in my heart and throbby over the gracious Miss Kerr; and wished I might be like her some day, but was sure I never, never could.

"Now," said Dottie, when we were again on our horses, headed for home, "I'll race you to the big gate," and she was off like the wind.

Another friend was "little Maudie Thomas"; everybody called her that, because she was so slight and dainty and fair and pretty, like a little princess, with her big blue eyes and her mass of golden curls; and she had just the prettiest ways. Her family had only been West a short time—her father, Captain Thomas, being register at the land office. And "Maudie" had been kept away from home at a seminary, so she wasn't all sunburned and wind whipped and dust blown like the rest of us. She was the only girl, though she had a lot of brothers, and they lived in a big rambling house in the midst of many acres down along the river. Her mother was fair and pretty like Maudie, only grown older, and their home was a centre for all sorts of social events, especially those of the church, for Mrs. Thomas, like Mamma, was a Methodist, and very much interested in getting a church built. For as yet there were no churches—just beginnings of them.

CHAPTER IV

Some of the newcomers had adopted the way of many old-timers, of all getting in the family hack on Sunday and going fishing; but there was no Sunday fishing for us; we had to go to Sunday school and church regularly, just as we had in Missouri. I liked it. The church was so funny, just a long narrow box building, a sort of hall, with wooden benches; it seemed like going to church in a camp. And the man who led the singing, "Sweet Potato" Morgan, had the biggest, most booming voice, so triumphant, someway, as if he saw the pearly gates wide open just ahead and was marching straight toward them. He was noted for having proved that sweet potatoes would grow in Yakima soil. Any time any one proved that a new thing would grow, he was hailed as "king" of that particular thing. There were cattle kings, of course; and apple kings, and alfalfa kings, and hop kings, and Mr. Morgan was "Sweet Potato" king. Papa said he was a fine man for the country. He had ten children, the largest family in town, and he brought them all to Sunday school; and in his big, booming, vibrant voice —head thrown back and eyes shining—he sang his soul right up to God with all of us trailing and quavering along after him, not even attempting to keep up.

It seemed queer that the Methodists had a full house always, and the other denominations barely a handful.

But there was a reason for it—Father Wilbur. We began hearing about Father Wilbur soon after we arrived, and at every turn we heard something more. Father Wilbur was the Indian agent President Lincoln had first appointed to the Yakima agency, and who had been reappointed by all succeeding presidents, till now he was a very old man, and retired, but still spiritual adviser, not only to the Indians, but to a large proportion of the early settlers, for he was a missionary preacher and a Methodist. With Father Wilbur, the whole thing was to be a Methodist. You might be an all-right person without, but the safest way was just to be a Methodist.

I had always respected clergymen, of course, but I had never thought of being *wild* about one; but just everybody in our church of the earlier population grew all shiny-eyed and happy every time they got to talking about Father Wilbur. Now that he had retired, he lived in Walla Walla, but every once in a while he came back to see how his Indians were getting along; and he always preached; and when he did there wouldn't be an old-timer left in our church; they had all driven off at daylight to hear Father Wilbur on the Reservation, about twenty miles away.

He was a huge man, weighing 300 pounds, and he always rode a mule because no horse was strong enough to carry him. His great fight was against the bootleggers who were forever selling liquor to the Indians. And he was so strong, and so handy with his fists, that even the bootleggers were afraid of him. One day he strode up to a soft-drink stand, where he had evidence that liquor was being sold and, reaching out his two big

hands, he seized the two proprietors before they could dodge, pulled them across the counter, and banged their heads together till their noses ran blood, then threw them into the road like a pair of rats; and then he raided the place and emptied out all the liquor; and when the men came to, he was standing over their bodies like a colossus of Rhodes, and he wanted to know if they'd have some more, or were they through, and they were through. The Indians said he wasn't all man, but part bear.

But he had just the biggest heart; there wasn't a thing he wouldn't do to get an Indian into church and make a Methodist of him. He would fight his way into wigwams where bad Indians were gathered, plotting, and kneel down and pray with them till they turned good; or he would go into a lazy Indian's field and plough for him a whole day to bribe him to come to church. He thought if he could only get them into church and hold them there long enough, the magic of conversion would happen, and it did.

There was an old French-Canadian bootlegger who made more trouble than anybody else. Finally, Father Wilbur got Jack Splawn, one of the old-time cattle men of the country, and together they went over to the Frenchman's ranch, which was near the Reservation, to clean it up. The Frenchman, a little sun-dried, wind-whipped old man, saw them coming and began to shake in his boots. Father Wilbur got down out of his hack, strode up to him, and accused him of having liquor on his premises.

"No, no," excitedly protested the old man. "I have no liquor; for ten years I have no liquor on my ranch!"

"Is that so?" said Father Wilbur, and picking up a spade he went over to the pigsty and began digging; and pretty soon he threw out a jug of whiskey.

The old Frenchman was frightened half to death; he knew the law against having liquor near the Reservation, and he knew Father Wilbur; he knew there would be no mercy. He now turned, his teeth chattering and his knees shaking, to Jack Splawn. "What I do, Jack?" he groaned. "Oh, what I do—what I do?"

"If you want my advice," said Jack, "you'll turn Methodist just as quick as ever you can."

So the wretched old bootlegger cried out: "Oh, Father Wilbur, I so sorry! I so sorry! I want to be one good man! I want to be a Methodist!"

Father Wilbur stopped spading and smashed the jug. "All right," he said, "you can be a Methodist, but you must go on probation."

With that he proceeded to load the old man and all his disreputable family into his wagon and drove off with them to the Reservation. And there he made them go to church, and prayer meeting, and experience meeting, and class meeting, and gave them such a soul-searching and heart-scorching, that, by the end of the month, every one of them was truly converted, not only to Methodism, but to Father Wilbur and his standards; and were returned once more to their own ranch, where they had lived ever since, as good, law-abiding, hard-working citizens; and the old Frenchman had become first aide to Father Wilbur in capturing bootleggers and putting down the selling of liquor to the Indians.

Everybody said he was the best Indian agent that

ever lived; the Yakimas had given no trouble to anyone since he had been in charge, though they had been among the fiercest of the warring tribes before that. They all said that, if he had been named on the peace commission to deal with the Klamaths, General Canby would never have been killed, and all the wretched bloodshed would have been averted. The jealousy of other Indian agents in the Northwest had prevented his appointment.

He was just as keen about schools as he was about Methodism, and before being appointed to take charge of the Indians, he had gone all up and down the Willamette valley, in Oregon, establishing schools everywhere, and making everybody go to school, or help build one. And before that, it was said, he had been a Bowery policeman in New York. Just what had changed his mode of life and sent him West to change so many other lives, no one seemed to know, but it had happened, and here he was, and here was his crop of Methodists. A suitable church was to be built right away, and everybody was busy carrying out his wishes and ideas, even though he wasn't there any more. If Father Wilbur had said a thing must be done, the edict was not questioned in the camps of the old-timers.

CHAPTER V

Another excitement in the town was home-building. All the newcomers were planning country homes with gardens, and orchards, and stables, and horses, and dogs, and plenty of run room for the children. Zona's father had bought land 'way out on "the bench" overlooking the town, and was preparing to build, with everyone saying "What does he want to go *'way out there* for?" The Thomases already had their country home among the poplar trees down by the river. Papa finally decided on ten acres to the north of the town, a mile out, and again people thought it so queer to go so far away. Years later when the town had absorbed all these "permanent country homes," and turned their acreage into town lots, and gone on beyond them, we had to smile over the dreams of these founders, each of whom had been so sure that his choice was the wisest for permanence; just as we had to smile over the conception of those others who thought these men were simply moving out of the world.

As soon as Papa had his land, he found a wonderful old gardener, and put him to work laying out the grounds. But soon he was going out so often to oversee the planting, that he decided we would move out, where we could watch things. He had some sheds thrown together for a summer camp and we moved.

It was great fun, just like camping out. Piles and

piles of lumber were already there, for the new house, and the basement was being dug, and the architect was on the ground, overseeing everything. Mamma had a good deal of trouble with the architect, who wanted to build a very showy house with gingerbread work all over it, a house he could point to with pride, and that would get him other houses to build. The open climate and the speed and cheapness with which the cloth-and-paper box houses could be built made it difficult to arouse the old-timers to a desire for well-built houses. But while Mamma wanted a large, substantial house, with plenty of space for all the seven children to have a room apiece, she didn't want a gingerbready one. Papa left it to her, though he was inclined to side with the architect. Mamma had her way, however, and a large plain house with verandahs all around was agreed to. Papa sent to Portland for the interior woodwork, and three sets of folding doors. It was to be our last home, he said, so it must be roomy and spacious, with high ceilings and plenty of light and air. It seemed to rest him to think of being permanently settled once more, in a good home, and in a climate where the children could play out of doors all the year round and grow up strong and healthy. His own health was much improved, he had a large practice, and now all he had to do was to get the new house built and the grounds in order.

Oh, but it was a happy summer! Quickly we fell into an easygoing routine. Breakfast in the open, then Mamma off to her garden, directing the old gardener; Billy and the baby to their play farms and irrigation ditches, where they made and sailed little boats, the

two little girls—one so fair and fairylike, with Papa's large gray eyes, the other dark-eyed, full of her dreams—deep in plays, that they adapted from their reading. They read *Pilgrim's Progress* that summer, and went about with such heavy packs on their backs playing pilgrim that Mamma had to interfere. Andrew, mystic-eyed and dreamy, devoted himself to his two wonderful new dogs, a Scotch collie and a hunter, and to old man Cory, the gardener. Wese and I were busy with our horses and our new friends.

In the evening, Papa would come out from the office for dinner, which we had out of doors, and right away we'd all begin telling him things. Everything was news. The architect, an old bachelor with graying hair, would come over for a "few words with the doctor," but generally ended by sitting down and having dinner with us, and lingering afterward to pet the baby. Mamma said she wouldn't be a bit surprised if it wasn't right there while building our house that he decided to get married and have a family of his own, for he was married that autumn to a new school teacher in town. We all liked him.

When we would be finishing the last crumbs, someone would shout, "Oh, look at the sun!" And then we would all get up and go over to the steadily lowering lumber piles and perch all over them, watching the sunset—keeping just as still as if we were in a church. Always it was the most gorgeous sight, and different every evening. Living out of doors, as we mostly did, we grew intimate with it. Great splashes of fire-colour would sweep over the mountains and down the valley, turning the sagebrush to a burnished

gold; then, gradually, the brilliant colours would tone down into pale rose, and mauve, and lavender—like fire showing through ashes—and then the fire would go completely out, and all the valley would be one vast ash gray . . . and someone would sigh, and we would all sort of come to, and likely the architect would say, "If an artist painted that, nobody back East would believe it was true."

And how the larks sang! Just bursting their throats! Someway, a lark always made me want to cry: it was *too* sweet, suggesting something that never was quite on our earth, or never could quite be; something you might be on the edge of experiencing all your days, but never quite would. I wondered always what it was the larks were singing about, and if I'd ever find it, for, lovely as the earth was, it went beyond it.

In the long, long twilight, Papa would go with old man Cory to look over the garden, with all of us tagging after. Everything was coming along marvellously, with ripening fruits and vegetables abnormally large. People driving by would stop to see the garden and exclaim over the wonders of the huge potatoes—one would fill a baking dish and was enough for our entire family—and big ripe red tomatoes weighing a pound apiece, and cabbages that crowded a washtub, and pumpkins that were too large to handle; and they would nod their heads while their eyes shone, and exclaim, "By George, but it's a great country!" Standing there in the midst of the small cultivated patch and looking away to the great rolling plains of sand and sagebrush that needed only irrigation to produce in the same astonishing way. They

didn't dream, then, in those hard-working, sweating days of clearing, planting, and irrigating, of any other problem in agriculture. Just hard work, and this they were willing to do—and had done. Homes, good food in abundance, health and happiness—this was all they saw, for no serpent of marketing difficulties then reared his ugly head in their Garden of Eden.

Our house attracted a good deal of attention. One day an old cattle man named Thorpe stopped to see it, and turned to Papa in amazement. "Why, Doc," he exclaimed, "if you haven't gone and plastered the whole thing up tight! Why, man, you'll kill your chillen. Even a bird knows better than to plaster up its nest."

And then we realized this was the first plastered house in the county.

Over and over we wished for Black George and his wife Laura, who had always been woman of all work in our home, for there was no real household help to be had. The old-timers had Chinamen that they had had always, but it was impossible to get a new one, for a prejudice had grown up against bringing any more into the country. There were no Negroes, no "poor whites," there was no servant class. Indian women from the Reservation would come at times, but they had very little idea, after all, of the white man's ways. So we managed the work mostly among ourselves, dividing up the duties, and got along very well. Mamma was an awfully good cook, using the old-fashioned Southern recipes, making great twenty-egg cakes, and wonderful bread, and always

hot rolls for breakfast; and we had two Jersey cows, and chickens that laid numerous eggs, and vegetables in abundance, and watermelons so large and luscious and in such quantity that we would bring in half a dozen every evening, and burst them open, lifting out the ripe red hearts and throwing the rest over the fence to the cows. . . . But, oh, for a cook! Cooking seemed to Mamma the last thing on earth worth spending good time on, when there were flower beds to be worked, and books to be read. I still wonder that she did it so well when she hated it so heartily. But she never experimented, just kept a cook book open beside her when she was making anything, and went exactly by the recipe, and the dish always came out perfectly. Of course, we children were all pressed into service, and we all learned to cook.

It was an ordeal, having Indian Susie, who did all the rough work. She was a heavy squaw with a red bandanna around her head and generally dressed in a red Mother Hubbard gown. The washing would be put out for her, and the tubs got ready, and she would start in. But after she had everything soaking wet, she would sit down in the sun and sun herself. Mamma would come along from the garden in her wide hat, her trowel in her hand, and seeing Susie sitting there, would say:

"What in the world, Susie? Why don't you wash?"

"Halo washee," Susie would come back in a whiny singsong, her hand out. "Halo washee."

After Mamma learned the technique, she would go get a dime and put it in Susie's hand; and Susie would hunch to her feet once more and start to work. But in

an hour Mamma would be back again and find Susie again sunning.

"Halo boily," she would whine, again with her hand out; and Mamma would go get another dime and start her boiling. So it would be through all the process of rubbing, rinsing, starching, hanging out. Susie had to be paid at every stage of the way through that labyrinth of linen. And as we were a mile from town, and had no close neighbours, and didn't always remember to have small change in the house, it was quite an inconvenience. A dollar given her on the start had no more effect than a dime; at the second stage of the process, she stopped just the same. So we adopted Susie's method and tried to remember to have small change in the house to pay her for each service. Susie was certainly the original nickel-in-the-slot machine.

But all difficulties with Susie were more than made up in our joy over the old gardener. Originally a Nova Scotian, for forty years and more he had been a diamond miner in South America. Now old age and rheumatism had driven him back to the soil. He'd make it yet, he would tell us, as we would gather about him in the evening—yes, he'd make it, if he could just get another stake, if the Doctor would stay by him till he did. He'd made three fortunes and lost them all, but he'd get on his feet again. And did we know what would happen when he did? Listen—and we'd draw closer, awed—he had a sweetheart in the old country, and he'd be sending for her, that he would. Oh, such a fair lass, she was—we'd see! Then he'd slip his big, rough old hand down into his trousers' pocket and pull out a handful of ugly black

stones—uncut diamonds, all he had left from his lifetime of making and losing fortunes. He was saving them for Nelly, he'd tell us softly, there under the high stars, but we could look at them. Yes, if we were careful, we could even hold them in our hands—great diamonds—they'd be shining bright once they were cut. Very happy, old Cory, dreaming there over his dirty little stones, seeing visions of vast wealth, and Nelly. And sure enough she came one day, came of her own accord, after forty years of waiting, a dear little old Scotch lady with her trunks and chests full of linen and quilts she'd been getting ready all these years. And they finished their lives together in a small cottage in the town. It was a wonderful place to go for tea and cookies.

CHAPTER VI

But all this lovely summer that we were engrossed in starting the new home, things had been happening. New people had been coming in on every train, real estate was booming, and the slogan, "Ten acres are enough," was populating the valley. Money was being raised to build new churches, plans were under way for a handsome schoolhouse, and social life was taking form. There were frequent card parties, and there was to be a firemen's ball!

Everybody must go to the firemen's ball, Fred Reed said—he was the leading real estate man and the wildest town booster—because money must be raised for a pump. It wouldn't do just to buy tickets—you must come out, show the right spirit. The firemen, when they weren't putting out fires, were young business men, and they must be encouraged.

Fred Reed was about the finest booster a new town ever had, I guess: a tall, broad-shouldered, plains-looking man, heavily bronzed, with jolly blue eyes, and a way about him that no one could resist. He was always starting something. Whenever you saw him swaggering along in his russet clothes and his wide gray Stetson, and stopping at some corner with a group of men, pretty soon you heard bursts of laughter, and wished you were a man, so you could stop at the corner, too, and hear all about it, and have

a good laugh. All summer he had had a jar of beans in his window, and above it a placard saying whoever came nearest guessing the number of beans in the jar would be given a town lot. Every time I went into town I would stop before his window and try to count those pesky beans, but I could never be sure which one I had counted last, and the thing nearly drove me crazy. Dear old Fred Reed: I saw a newspaper item recently about how they were going to erect a monument to his memory in Idaho, where he went later and made—and lost—several fortunes and helped other people to make them. It ought to be a very expansive monument, one that would make people passing take deep breaths, and stick out their chests, and go on their way feeling brisk and lively.

But the firemen's ball: Papa objected at first—he said his daughters were a little young for that sort of thing. "But they're months older than when they came," was Fred Reed's cheerful rejoinder. "Just see what climate will do! Come along, Doc, let us have your girls." And as a closing argument, "Now see here, Doc, you don't want to keep your girls shut off to themselves. Let them dance and have a good time. You have to admit that there never was a cleaner, whiter town. No saloons, why, your girls are as safe on the streets at night as in your old home. Now, were you as easy in your mind about them in Missouri?" Papa had to admit he was not. We had no saloons in Yakima—under local option—and everything was remarkably new and fresh and open and aboveboard: no drunken men, no shuttered doorways past which we must hurry, no figures slipping like rats out of dark

alleyways, no shadows of past wrongs, no ghosts—ghosts were yet to walk.

I think Papa wanted us to enter into everything and be happy, and he didn't see any real harm in the cards or dancing or the firemen's ball—when such nice men were firemen—but generations of ministerial background coloured his social outlook. His ancestry kept getting in his way. He was a little old-fashioned in his ideals: he thought children should be taught Bible verses, and hymns, and prayers—not as their exclusive teaching, but as a part of their daily life while growing up. He thought their minds should be lined with the highest thoughts of all the ages, in a happy way, all mixed up with the out of doors, and joyousness, and beauty, and the breeze against your face on a good horse; just as he thought they should have a permanent home into which the very tendrils of their being could cling. He thought very nice things. But in the matter of Yakima's rather free-and-easy social life, he found it difficult to know just what to think. He didn't want us made unhappy by being kept out of things, and he didn't want to oppose the spirit of the town; so he compromised by leaving it all to Mamma. Mamma had always danced as a girl, at very grand balls in St. Louis, so she had no prejudices as far as the dancing was concerned.

It was decided at last that Wese and I could go. "What's the objection?" Fred Reed insisted. "Won't everybody be there?"

"That's just the trouble," said a young matron newly arrived. "The way you're running things, Fred Reed, you will have the whole town there! And if I

was caught in the Paul Jones and had to dance with the fat butcher who brings my steaks, I'd just die."

"That's easy," said Fred. "Tell him you're subject to fits and feel one coming on. He'll let go of you, all right. And now, Doc, as I was saying . . ."

Nothing halted Fred Reed; he ran them all in, all that conglomerate that made up Yakima's first four hundred inhabitants. He's a nephew of Hiram Powers, the great sculptor? Bring him along, by all means. He's an English lord? Well, lords can dance, can't they? Captain Kingsbury, one of the big engineers who laid out the Northern Pacific railroad? Fine fellow—of course he'll come. Old Doc Morrison's little girl who's going East to be made into an artist? Well, let's give her one royal good time, anyway. Mrs. Steinweg, the botanist and geologist? Leigh R. Freeman, the editor? Wes Jones, that's stung with the senatorial bee and goes to the Methodist church? Of course, they'll all come. We'll get back of Jones pretty soon and send him to the Senate. The Milroys, Judge Graves, Ed Whitson—names that went deep into the state's upbuilding—they all had to go to the firemen's ball, all that varied assortment that the railroad had lured to the little new town.

Wese and I were wild about it. It was our first dance—and it was to be a masquerade. Clara Chapman, old man Allen's daughter, a young married woman who was just like a girl, so gay and happy, and who had taken a great liking to Wese, helped us with our costumes. They were supposed to be Chinese, made of cheesecloth and ornamented with bright-coloured flowers and figures cut out of wall paper and

pasted on. Everybody tried to do something original and fantastic, for everybody was going, even many girls of only twelve and thirteen, because they needed girls so badly.

And, oh, how jolly it was! It was in the biggest, barniest hall they could find, decorated all over with bunting, and Fred Reed had brought in a caller from 'way out among the old cattle ranches, where he had "called" always for the country dances. They had mostly quadrilles so everyone could get acquainted. The old caller would sing-song the calls out, beating time with his foot every minute, and sawing away on his shabby old fiddle. They had an orchestra, but everyone liked the old fiddler's music best. It somehow caught you right up and flung you into the rhythm of it, and whether you could dance or not, pretty soon you just were dancing, all in one grand scramble of bald heads, and boy heads, and older women, and young girls—all laughing, and running, and romping through the figures as if they were out together on some grand playground.

Till midnight we kept it going, then we went to another big barny hall for supper, with everyone flushed, and gay, and excited, as if at a street fair or something; and then we went home. But I was still dancing inside, still in the swing and sway of an old fiddle scraping out a jolly measure; and I went to bed and to sleep, with lines singsonging through my head, about, "Birdie fly out and partner fly in. Partner fly out and give birdie a swing . . . Right hand to your partner, and all promenade."

CHAPTER VII

We moved into the new house and spread ourselves out in all the nice large airy rooms. When visitors came they would say first thing, "How nice for parties!" On account of the three sets of folding doors and the possibility of throwing the lower floor into one great space. Everyone liked our house. "Why, how lovely!" they would say, as if surprised. A regular house was still so new in the valley. The library was the longest getting settled: all those books! The spot I soon learned to love best was the doorway at the front, upstairs. Here I would curl up on the floor by the hour looking off across the great valley. The town lay like a little dab of hen scratching in the middle of it, scarcely disturbing the desert look of it all. In the early morning, when everybody was starting a fire for breakfast, the smoke from chimneys would go straight up in soft gray plumes against the pinkish-lavender sky, and it would all be so still, like a painted picture. I would almost hold my breath with the beauty of it.

Now that we had our books unpacked, and the days were growing cooler, and the evenings long, the earlier family habit reasserted itself with lamp-lighting time and every head was bent to a book reading. Wese had started again on Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* which she had begun in Missouri,

having first finished Rollins' *Ancient History,* and she couldn't be pried loose from it. But I couldn't settle into the reading habit again, after the long months of freedom and activity. I wanted to be doing something, wanted action. So I kept a diary and wrote in it just what I thought about them all, reading their lives away. I said that all the books in the world should be destroyed, particularly all the old musty, leather-backed books. I made faces all up and down my margins at the books, sticking my tongue out at the Roman Empire. And then I began a story, and that was more exciting, and I didn't care any more if they all just would read and wouldn't talk, for I was deep in it, and didn't want to be disturbed, either.

Tick, tock; tick, tock, would go the old clock, with everything so still—only a turned page now and then. Tick, tock; tick, tock; tick, tock . . . Reading, and writing, and dreaming, while the old clock ticked off the time. Happy old clock, then, ticking off such happy time; all of us together . . . tick, tock; tick, tock; tick tock . . .

But still other things were happening in town; another daughter of Mr. Allen, the cattle king, had come home from college in Boston; and she was very fair and stately and intellectual; and she was saying to the mothers that it was a *perfect shame* the way parents were letting their daughters run wild! They should every one be sent away to school! Why, the girls were growing up *perfect hoydens!* What could the mothers be thinking of? Her father was one of the old-time cattle kings, who had turned modern and progressive when the railroad came through, and was

now a banker, though he hadn't been modern enough to desert the "old town" right away. You see the "old town" had been there for years, a little oasis in the desert, with trees, and flowers, and water in the ditches making everything grow. When the railroad came through, the people hadn't been sure they wanted it, so they hadn't been very gracious about arranging for a depot site. This had made the railroad people mad, so they had moved on up to the centre of the valley and laid out a new town, and had offered everyone in the "old town" a lot, if they would move up—moving their houses for them with cayuses. Most of them had finally moved. But some had stayed by the old town out of loyalty to the earlier days, and among these was Mr. Allen. I secretly admired him for this. It seemed so fine, just sticking by the little town that the cattle men and Indian traders had made all by themselves there in the desert.

I would see him going about the streets, the tall, straight, gray-bearded gentleman, some way kingly still, but a little wistful, too, I thought, like a good king who had been dethroned through no fault of his own, but merely because kings were now out of date; and I would wonder if he wasn't wishing the railroad hadn't come to spoil the open range and drive the great herds into corrals, wishing he still had his cowboy outfits all over the country. To be merely a banker after all this big open free life—there was something tragic about it.

But now his stately daughter had come home; and she was stirring up the mothers; mostly the old-time mothers, for the newer mothers had been worried

right along about their children, some of whom were already being sent away to Tacoma, or Seattle, or Portland, to seminaries or universities. Mamma had always talked Vassar for us. She often told us how she and Papa began arguing about the best college for girls when their first daughter was born, and always she had clung to Vassar. Her own unappeased hunger for a student's life made her choose this course. She had had to snatch time for her reading ever since her first baby was born, so she had planned to give her daughters the thing that she had craved for herself. She had been graduated from a seminary, all that was open to girls in her day, but it had not been satisfying. Her diploma hung on her bedroom wall, however, pointing the way.

Nothing but school was now in the air. All over town the girls were talking it. The daughters of the old-timers could almost all go, if they wished, for their fathers were prospering beyond their wildest dreams, hops bringing unheard of prices in London, alfalfa giving four and five crops a season, apples from young orchards finding the highest market in New York, and great cattle ranches that hadn't been worth much except for grazing purposes selling at huge prices, to be subdivided into smaller tracts and sold under the "Ten acres are enough" slogan. Whole families of girls near of an age who had grown up all at once, it seemed, and who lived near town, now decided to go away to school. Such blooming girls, peppy as ponies and deep in the years when you laugh at just nothing at all. They had lived all their lives in the open, had helped brand calves and break horses and round up

cattle; but now they were fired with the new spirit: they must go away to school.

I saw many of the girls off, though neither Zona nor Dottie went, as their mothers were not well. "Little Maudie Thomas" went back to the seminary in Tacoma with all her gentlemanly little brothers at the station to say good-bye. And Wese went to the state university. Papa said we must become a part of the new country into which we had moved, where he had invested, and from whose people he made his living; and that there was no better way for young people to become truly a part of a country than to attend its schools. Mamma gave up Vassar for Wese, but said, by the time the younger girls were ready, it would be all right for them to go.

The children started to the public school; and I got a set of Rand, McNally schoolbooks, the kind required, and prepared to study at home. The new Methodist church was started, with the church people giving suppers and holding bazaars to help pay for it. "Sweet Potato" Morgan boomed in his big, triumphant voice, "I'm one day nearer home than I've ever been before," and everybody was happy.

Windows open wide on Christmas Day: it certainly was a wonderful climate. Snow would come and there would be a few days of sleighing, then a chinook wind would blow up warm as spring and melt it all and lap up the water, and the children would be out playing in the sun and the sand again. Wese was studying very hard, carrying twice as many studies as she should, and taking examinations and getting credits in others. She loved the university, and had many friends, and her

letters were full of enthusiasm. I must go next year, she wrote, and she advised me to study and get ready.

The winter passed, and it was spring again, with grass greening over the great valley, water running in all the golden ditches, flowers springing up under the sagebrush everywhere, and Papa consulting with old man Cory over the garden and some new things he wanted to try out. He had a row of walnut trees planted that would not begin to bear for ten years. "But that is all right," he said, lightly. "It's something to look forward to."

One evening in May he came in from examining all his growing things, with the baby in his arms. "Everything will be better this year, Mamma," he said. He was unusually buoyant. The feeling of spring and new life was in the air. He was better, he had laid his cane quite aside; and all the children were husky and well, the baby even being naughty at times, and almost having to be punished, which was considered a good sign. He put the baby down. "Better this year, Mamma," he repeated—and lay back on his couch and was gone.

CHAPTER VIII

With Papa's death everything changed: we seemed now like a different family entirely. Sadness, worry, uncertainty took the place of the old dominant joy. Papa was creative, a planner, a doer: Mamma was a student, a thinker, a dreamer. She had never in her life had the whole responsibility—always there had been her father, her brother, or her husband. To make matters worse, men came—some saying they had been friends of Papa, some saying they wanted to help Mamma, who was now a widow with seven children—men with plans for investment, full of shout and hurrah. She must put her money into this and into that; she would be a rich woman, some day, if she did; they only wished they had the cash to take advantage of the wonderful opportunities; real estate would make you; all you had to do was to get in on the ground floor, buy enough, make first payments on good pieces of property that were sure to rise and produce a handsome profit before other payments were due. And so she drew in money that was safely invested, bringing in a good income, and put it into real estate. These advisers may have been perfectly sincere, for everybody was wild about real estate, but as Papa had been conservative, buying only his home and his office property, they had better have left things as he left them, had better not have intruded. I have

always been glad that Fred Reed was not one of the men to rush to Mamma with that free advice after Papa died, for it would have been a real loss to lose him out of my faiths.

Evenings, now, Mamma read aloud to us—from Shakespeare, or Lamb, or Irving, or Hawthorne, or some of the modern writers to whom she was devoted—until the younger children fell asleep and were sent up to bed. Everything seemed so uncertain now, but the children's tastes must be developed for the best in literature: that would stay with them always, no matter what happened. Restless, I would slip away upstairs to where Papa's medical library was stored—his office had been rented to two other physicians who came to take his place—and browse through his books all the evening. I had dreams, now, of being a physician some day, and devoting myself to making people well, as he had always done. I seemed nearer him in his library, among the books that had meant the most of all books to him always. Sometimes I could almost see him, so serious and quiet there, his head bent to a book, intent on finding a reason for a thing, an answer to a problem, a way to make things better.

That autumn I went to the university; but it wasn't successful in my case. I was trying to make up my terrific lack in mathematics, and I hadn't a brain cell for it. Working over problems in algebra and geometry made me positively ill. I even tried higher arithmetic, and that was worse still. To this day, when I am very tired, all night I try to work problems in arithmetic, all the old weariness coming back into my dreams and making of sleep a nightmare.

As for other subjects such as literature and history, why, all my life I had heard these things discussed; our table talk and evening library talk at home was much keener and fresher and zippier than that of the classroom. It some way seemed yawny, making a *lesson* of a thing that was matter for daily discussion. And I couldn't care just for making grades, passing examinations.

One day toward spring, dear old President Gatch stopped me as I was slipping through a corridor, caught my chin in his hand, tipped up my face, and, looking into it keenly, said: "Pretty pale, little girl: better hie away home."

I was glad to go. Dear old President Gatch—he had been educating young people from the dry sagebrush lands and the rainy emerald ones too many years not to know what it meant when a girl from the sagebrush grew pale and listless in school. Better just send her along home.

I carried with me a roll of drawings. I had loved doing these, and Mamma was proud of them, and had them framed and hung on the walls. They weren't very good, though; I had more love than talent.

But my brother Andrew was the amazing one: out of a clear sky he had announced his desire to become a clergyman. His sudden choice was a surprise, for he had always been a regular out-and-out boy, with outdoor tastes—fishing, and hunting, and swimming, and riding his horse. But the Monroes had always been clergymen when they weren't physicians; these were the two family professions for generations back. Our grandfather and his three brothers, from Virginia,

had been clergymen, establishing churches all up and down the frontier of their day—beautiful spiritual-minded men who saw no other thing to do in life but to go about to the most out-of-the-way places, increasing spiritual insight on the earth. They all lived till well past eighty, carrying the light till they died. So, as Mamma said, it ran in Andrew's blood. She was very happy about it, only, she said, it meant a new programme for him. His education must begin seriously. He had never been very robust, so Papa had encouraged his out-of-door life; but now he was much stronger, and soon he must be in college. This was a problem. The other children were growing up fast, Billy being a regular boy now, deep in some trade, and not to be disturbed to welcome a mere sister home. He had a very old head and was already assuming considerable leadership.

"He will have to be the physician of the family," Mamma said, looking at him with tremendous pride. He was like Papa—quiet, reticent, going on with his plan. The physicians dated far back, too, to one Sir Andrew Monroe, in Scotland, famous as a surgeon.

How to get so many children through college? It was a problem: I had not prospered away from home alone, and Mamma doubted if Andrew would. There seemed nothing to do but to give up our Yakima home, and move to where there were adequate schools. She chose Tacoma because there was a good seminary there, a good university, and an excellent public-school system. It also had the name of being an ideal home city.

Giving up our home was almost more than any of

us could stand. It put Mamma to bed. It didn't seem possible that we could be leaving it forever—that home into which Papa had put so much thought and love so we would have a good home on the earth always. All the pretty fruit trees that were now beginning to show by their "first fruits" what they had in store for us—the setting out of every one of which Mamma and Papa had personally superintended; and the garden, and the horses, and the dogs. It really seemed that we could never part with the horses. And as for the dogs, we gave them away time and again, wanting to make sure they were in good hands before we left, but each time they would come back, jumping up all over us in an ecstasy at being home again. One day after we left town we heard that the collie had come running wildly up to old Carl, whom the new owner was driving, jumping up all about him, licking him, and carrying on so *sufferingly,* that the new owner had to acquire the dog; and till they died the collie accompanied the old horse in all his jauntings about the town.

It's a terrible thing to tear up the roots from a loved place that you have created. No wonder Mamma had to go to bed over it. But she would have died outright if her children couldn't be properly educated.

Before we finally got away, of course, I had to have an accident, and this delayed us. I usually came through wild experiences with surprising escape from injury—I was so quick to act—but this time I wasn't so fortunate. It was a freshly broken team, nervous, foaming at the mouth, pawing to be off. The driver, handing me the reins, sprang out of the hack to get some

forgotten object, and the horses, startled by the spring, reared and plunged, and were away like mad things into the open country. I pulled and sawed at their mouths, but I might as well have pulled and sawed at a cyclone. Knowing the rough country ahead, the stony patches, the deep gulches, I jumped—and landed badly. A dislocated hip, a fractured shoulder, bed for days, crutches for weeks, an achy feeling in my spine that didn't lessen as the rest of the lameness did, the old fearlessness about horses gone—this seemed at the time the sum of the injuries.

Even with this delay, we reached Tacoma in time for the fall school terms. We bought another home, but we didn't love it into existence, just bought it—an ordinary town house on a single lot, built to sell. The purchaser of our Yakima home made but a small down payment, giving Mamma a mortgage for the balance, so we couldn't buy such a very large house. The lawyer in Tacoma who handled the two sales said, when he came to the house with the mortgage on the Yakima place, that he was surprised to find the buyers had given Mamma a *second* mortgage; he hadn't intended it to be a *second* mortgage, but perhaps it would be all right. He had worked quite hard on the two deals, and he didn't want them to fall through. And Mamma was anxious to close them, too, and get settled in the new home.

So, when the lawyer laid the papers before her to sign, she didn't pay much attention to what he said about its being a *second* mortgage, just signed them and exclaimed, "Well, I'm glad *that's* off my mind."

Tacoma was very beautiful, all nested in greenery,

with woods and lakes out beyond the town, a great bay water front, and a wonderful old snow-covered mountain—Mount Tacoma—at its very door. All the little lawns were like velvet, so neat and orderly, and all along them were rose bushes with the late roses still in bloom. Mamma began immediately to plant the choicest tea roses all about our new home. This was the most serious problem now—to get the roses in in time for next year's blooming. They grew past all imagination.

But the year was hardly on its way when a new worry began: second payments came due on the real estate Mamma had purchased, and there was no money with which to meet them. We would sell something, we said; but when we tried it, we found we could sell nothing. For a slump had set in, following the long period of wild booming, and real estate was not moving. To make matters worse, a panic swept the country, several local banks closed, and everything was at a standstill.

Wesé began to teach in the city schools, with everyone saying right away what a fine teacher she made, because she knew how to handle children so well; and I crammed on Rand, McNally schoolbooks, passed the teachers' examinations, and was accepted for student training in the city Normal school. Andrew, who was working hard over Greek and Latin, found some kind of work to do after school hours. And now we were all living a regular treadmill life: up at a certain time, off at a certain time, everything fixed and grooved, every waking hour filled with duties, every sleeping hour oppressed with worries. For it was a

question whether, with our most strenuous efforts, we should be able to hold on to the property and tide things over till we could make sales. We would cut down here, do without there, and manage to get enough money together to meet a payment, or interest on it, or an assessment, or taxes, and send it along, and begin to breathe easier again, only to find another piece of property in a tight place, and the same thing to do all over again.

How I hated property! How I envied people who had none, not even a home of their own. I was for letting it all go, and just living on the income from Papa's earlier safe investments, and on what we children earned, but Mamma couldn't conceive of such a thing. Much of the property had originated with her father, an inheritance from his estate, and it seemed sacrilege to let it go. We must hold on to it, come what would. Even so, we lost our Yakima home utterly, the man who held the first mortgage promptly foreclosing and crowding Mamma out; so that lovely place was almost a total loss. And such a few years later it sold for $50,000, and afterward brought many times that amount, when cut up into city lots.

The routine was deadly to me: doing the same thing over and over. "How'd she die? She died doing this"—I found myself repeating the old childish lines. In the schoolroom I would look across the forty little heads, all bent to their lessons, and then I would look out the window and away to the far green hills, all so sombre in their coating of firs, so endless, going on and on, more hills and more hills, covered with an eternity of trees; and the life I was living seemed like

that: endless, sombre, monotonous. It wasn't my life, it wasn't the thing I had planned to do. I knew now, looking back over the years, that I had never had but one dream, and that was to be a writer. "Some day I'll be a writer," I had always thought happily when thinking of the future. Now, I must play; I wasn't ready yet; but some day, some day. There had been dreams of being a physician, but that was more sentiment than anything else, to be like Papa, to do what he did. Inside, in my own deep inner self, I had always meant to be a writer. It was the long, long dream of the golden years.

And now it couldn't come true. There was no time, ever, no hours alone, no prospect of hours alone, just years and years of this.

Another trouble, I was never well: that ache that the runaway had left in my spine had been growing more grindingly achy right along, instead of just gradually fading out, as the other aches had. More and more I needed to rest, to relax my spine. Some days I could scarcely get through the hours on my feet. How long could I keep it up? What would happen when I couldn't keep going any more? An invalid in the family—one more burden for the rest to carry.

The thought was maddening.

CHAPTER IX

One day in the month of June, I lay resting in my room and thinking of all these things. How, plan and dream as you might, circumstances reached out and clutched you; you weren't a free agent on the earth; you never could be. Just a few days of rest, now, and I must be up and at it again, go to summer school, acquire credits for a higher diploma, get back on the treadmill; then autumn and the schoolroom once more. I might rebel inwardly for a few years, but the programme would get me, and it would own me, in time. The dream would go. Zona and Maud came back to my mind. Both girls had married, before ever they had had their hair up or their skirts down —had married so very young, capitalists—older men —who came to town and fell in love with the pretty girls. But then that had been their dream—they had been in love. And Dottie came to my mind—Dottie of the old happy golden days. Dottie was in school—for her mother had finally achieved her desire and died —and was preparing to go to London to be with her aunt. But this was Dottie's long dream. And here was I . . .

Rebellious, I sprang up! I would not be downed! I would not be defeated! Some way, some way, I would have my dream, too.

I decided I would go at once and find a place in

the woods—often I had dreamed of it—some ranch house where they would let me board, and I would hide away there, and I would write, and write, and write.

I was suddenly breathless with the idea. I must hurry. Something might stop me. Some wisdom might interfere. Some practical person might advise against it. I must hurry, hurry, hurry.

I went down town immediately and bought a thick roll of newsprint, the full-sized sheets, so I shouldn't lose time in turning them. And then I bought a dozen thick editors' lead pencils, the soft kind that do not have to be sharpened often.

I returned home and told Mamma and everybody that I was going out into the country somewhere instead of to summer school, and that I would let them know when I had an address.

I took the train that went through the woods between Tacoma and Seattle, and less than an hour out got off at a flag station called "Stuck." The name attracted me. The conductor told me a story about an emigrant train that had got stuck there years and years ago; and one of the men in the train stayed on, and filed on a claim, and he called the place "Stuck," because there he was. But, really, I thought he must have stayed because of the tall pointed firs, so fresh and green and fragrant, and the ferns everywhere. It was as beautiful as fairyland. Right away all problems of living evaporated and I felt in my own world again.

There wasn't a house in sight, but there was a road that wound off into the woods, and I followed it. Pretty soon it began to rain—a soft, gentle summer

rain that came down without a bit of fuss; but it wet the road and made puddles and mud. I was picking my way along, my head down, watching my step, when I almost collided with someone, and quickly looking up, I found myself face to face with an elderly lady, plump and motherly, all wrapped up in an old plaid shawl, and carrying a basket of strawberries. "Hel-*lo!*" she exclaimed with a happy sort of chuckle.

It was the most *illumined* face—gray eyes that fairly shone under a wide brow surmounted by a coil of slate-gray hair. Hardly knowing what I did, I turned about and walked with her. "A beautiful rain," she went on in a rich throaty voice. "Just what the gardens need. Oh, will you look at that robin—he took a strawberry right out of my basket. Help yourself, won't you, just as the robin did."

"I'm afraid I can't repay you with such a sweet song," I said, but helped myself.

"I'm taking them to a neighbour who doesn't raise strawberries," she went on. "At least, that is what I said when I left home, but really I wanted an excuse for a walk. Isn't the air delicious with that fresh, washed, woodsy, fragrance?"

It certainly was delicious. We chatted along till we came to the neighbour's house, a wretched shack in a stumpy clearing, without a single window. "We are going to put in windows for her," she said, sort of tenderly. "Well, good-bye. Enjoy your walk."

But I was appalled at the thought of losing her. "Oh, do let me come live with you," I burst out.

She laughed that funny, throaty chuckle that was so heartening. "Why, my dear, I haven't a place to

put you," she said. "We are building and are camped in four walls with a roof over our heads, and that's about all."

"Please let me come! I can sleep just anywhere."

She regarded me amusedly, but much as she might had I merely asked for another handful of strawberries; then she said, "All right, come along."

I could scarcely believe my good fortune: what a simple world it was, after all!

She gave the berries to a sick-looking woman who came to the door—she didn't seem especially sick of anything, just miserable in her dirt and rags and unable to be any different—and we started out again. We talked along as easily as old friends—of the trees and the wild flowers and the funny little squirrels with such bright eyes and straight-up tails; and presently we met Si, her husband, who was on his way to the railway track to light the switches: a thin, narrow-shouldered, town-bred looking elderly gentleman with a tremble in his voice, but brilliant dark eyes that twinkled.

My new friend started to introduce me, but stopped. "What *is* your name, my dear?" she asked.

I told her; neither of us had thought of names before. Her name was Purdy. She finished the introduction then explained to Si about my coming to live with them. He seemed pleased.

The house was a two-story one but without partitions as yet, and everything was very much of a heap, with unpacked boxes and barrels against the walls. But the clutter didn't seem to annoy her. A log was blazing on the hearth, for the house was deep in the

woods, and the air was cool. There were several comfortable chairs, a softly cushioned davenport, a long reading table littered with books and magazines, and a general air of comfort and well-being. Right away you wanted to hang up your hat.

"I hardly know where to put you," she said, looking about. "Si and I sleep in that corner back of the screen. We have our old bed and are very comfortable; but——"

"Then why can't I have the upper floor?" I asked.

"There's no flooring down yet, but the lumber is up there, and Si could lay some boards, so you wouldn't come through on us."

I ran up the stairs: it was all one big open space with many windows and smelling of the new lumber. "It's perfect," I called back. "And I can lay the boards myself." I ran on down. "And now can I have a table? Some wide boards laid together on horses will do."

"Why, yes, but I can give you a nice little reading stand for your bedside. We unpack things just as we need them, and Si can easily get out the stand. But what did you want it for—books?"

I tiptoed cautiously across to her as though I might be overheard, put my lips close to her ear, and whispered what no one else in all the world had been told —a great, a momentous secret: "I am going to write a novel."

"Of course, then, you'll want a large table," she said, quite as matter-of-factly as if I'd said I was going to shell peas. "And that will give Si an indoor job for to-morrow. He loves to do cabinet work."

I went on to the reading table. I found Emerson there, and Plato, and Confucius and Swedenborg—writers who held lanterns. And periodicals representing all sorts of cults and ists and isms. "There might be some truth in some of them that we would miss otherwise," Mrs. Purdy said, seeing me go from one magazine hastily to another. The magazines on our reading table had always been literary or scientific. These were new to me. I was curious about them. And yet there was not a preponderence of any one kind, nothing to suggest an adherence to any special brand of belief. I found, before the day was over, that the Purdys' attitude toward life was like that of scientists in a laboratory, seeking only to learn, not caring where knowledge came from. This was the big thing with them, this quest. Those other things—who they were, where they came from, what they were doing here—were unimportant. The facts, as they developed, were that Mr. Purdy had been a manufacturer of pins in New York, until the same panic that had tied us up so tight with property debts had brought on a collapse of business in the East, and dawning old age had found him with little to turn to but this strip of Western timber. They hadn't been able to sell it, so they had packed up their household goods and moved out to it and were now making a new home among the great trees.

They had managed to get an acre cleared and a garden in, and as fast as they could buy lumber were finishing the house. Their closest neighbours were the wretched Icelanders who had drifted south some way, and to whom Mrs. Purdy had been taking the straw-

berries. There was talk of an interurban line between Tacoma and Seattle, and if this went through, it would bring their land up in value, make it possible for them to sell off some of it, and live on the rest to a peaceful close of their years.

In the meantime, Si had got the job of lighting the switch lamps, and was thankful for the small sum it brought in, this man who most of his adult life had been at the head of his own factory.

That first night under their roof, I lay in the wide, cool bed in a state of absolute harmony. All the tension was gone, all the worry and fret, all the sense of futility and failure. I listened to the wind moaning through the treetops and fell into rhythm with it. I watched the shadows dancing on the walls, and danced with them in spirit. I even talked quietly to Papa: I told him not to be disturbed—that I would go on now and be what I had started out to be; that all his efforts for me would not be wasted, that I would complete my own life and his too. For it came to me in some strange way that I would be able to do that—live out his life as well as my own.

CHAPTER X

The next morning, immediately after breakfast, I went to work. I had my story well in mind. From the first word it fairly tumbled out. I wished for a faster medium. Hour after hour I wrote with absorbed concentration, concocting a sort of shorthand of my own to save writing all the words in full.

At twelve o'clock I was written out. I ran down the stairs in a state of wild excitement. It was perfectly wonderful, writing a book. The only trouble was that my hand would cramp, and my spine ache, so that I had to stop and rest. I wanted to go on and on, right through the day.

After lunch, I helped Mrs. Purdy with the dishes, then we went out and helped Si. They were like two children playing a game. It was romance to them—clearing the land and building a home when well past sixty. The stumps were like huge teeth with roots that twisted and turned and spread and clung. First Si would dynamite a stump, then he would take his ax and chop out the pieces that stuck, or his spade and dig around the long roots, loosening them. He was not strong, and he trembled a good deal, but all the time he beamed, and sweat, and mopped his brow, and really enjoyed his tussle with the land and the big trees. There's something about clearing land. It does

something to you besides making you tired. The Purdys were finding the same sort of exhilaration in it that we had found in taking a piece of sagebrush land and making it into a garden spot. They were having the same experience, only they had great trees to contend with; and then they were growing old.

Mrs. Purdy and I would pick up the pieces of stump left scattered by the dynamite, pile them into the wheelbarrow, and wheel them away to the woodshed to dry out for winter fires. They were full of pitch and would make wonderful flames.

I found that Si didn't use as much dynamite on the stumps as he might have, because of the cost. Every cent was counting with them, and counting big. We had agreed what I should pay, just what a country school teacher would pay, four dollars a week. After I had been there a few days I asked Mrs. Purdy to let me pay more, but she wouldn't consent to it.

Each day it was the same: all the morning I wrote, all the afternoon I helped clear away stumps, and in the evening we all looked proudly at my increasing stack of filled sheets and at the clearing that was so much larger than on the day before, for one stump taken out added a very noticeable area. And then we would cook dinner, and often while Mrs. Purdy stirred something on the stove and Si toasted his feet at the fireplace, I would read aloud from one of the old philosophers, and she would pause while beating the potatoes to hear something from Swedenborg, or Emerson, or some new writer. And Si, toasting his toes, would call out, "What's that?"—not wanting to miss any of it. They were true philosophers, eternally

seeking *the way* in everything. And when they found it, they began immediately to follow it. Philosophy was not a thing merely to discuss with them, but a plan to live by. They laid stress continually on how best to *live,* how best to meet the ups and downs, and to turn the downs into ups. They were truly questing people. Even sin had a side to it to be understood; it was not a thing merely to shun. It was well to be good, but just what was good? There might be two answers. Better look into it.

It was the nicest thing the way these two were interested in the same subjects, and in clearing the land, and building the house, and the way they took me into their togetherness and made me a part of their harmony.

At the end of two weeks my book was finished. I sat looking at the stack of large sheets, with their 60,000 words, feeling bereft. My child was gone from me. I began turning the pages and looking back, reading a passage here and there, becoming thrilled, reading on to see how it came out. It was difficult to get up and leave it. It was like a beloved child whose curls one can never have done caressing.

"It's finished," I announced, going down to lunch.

Mrs. Purdy stopped stirring the soup to receive the big news; and Si, wiping his hands on the roller towel, paused, and his eyes shone extra bright.

"Finished," repeated Mrs. Purdy; and after a moment's silence, while she looked at me with a beautiful tender smile, "And now what?"

"A publisher," I said.

"Of course," agreed Mrs. Purdy, "you must have a publisher."

Si came on to the table: "Have you thought of one?"

"Yes—I've chosen him."

Neither of them asked who he was.

CHAPTER XI

It was hard leaving the Purdys, leaving that magnificent woods atmosphere and the steady inspiration of their never-down minds. But I was quickly packed —my beloved novel in my bag, instead of merely white sheets of paper—and on my way.

At home I rented a typewriter and went to work on the copying. It was ghastly slow, picking the letters out with my two forefingers; and sometimes I hit a comma when I wanted a colon, or a period when I wanted a semicolon; and it was so tedious going back and erasing that finally I adopted the plan of just leaving all the marks in and going on, regardless. They wouldn't interfere with the reading of the story, and I hadn't time to keep erasing.

It took me nearly a month to type it: two weeks to write and four to type; but at last my story was finished. I now had three weeks before the fall term of school would open. If I was ever to be a writer, I had to achieve it in those three weeks. If I wasn't a writer by the end of that time—so acknowledged, with my book accepted—then I never would become one. It would be the schoolroom for me again.

So I began to pack my suitcase immediately, breathlessly, fearing something would get in my way. I would carry my manuscript to Chicago: I had a little money of my own, enough for this.

Mamma, sensing my excitement, stopped at my door: "Where now?" she asked.

"To Chicago, with my novel!" I hadn't talked much about the novel—it was still too sensitive a subject—and no one had seen it.

Mamma gasped.

"I'll go see if I can get a sleeper to-night," I said, and dashed out of the house. "I'll be right back."

I felt on fire: the time was so short! And I was afraid of someone stopping me, not by overpersuasion or force, but by sapping my courage. I felt a deep inside necessity to keep on the high tide—ride out on it. It was no time for advice or careful consideration. I must just go.

The next morning, with all the family at the train to see me off, with messages to the old friends in Missouri to whom I was supposed to make a flying visit before returning, and holding fast to my suitcase, in which lay the precious manuscript, I started. I knew I was carrying a great piece of work to Chicago, and it must be carefully guarded, for there was no other copy on earth.

As I caught my last glimpse of Mamma, I thought how very beautiful she was. Her hair that had always been such a rich dark brown and so abundant and curly about her face was now snow white; and this, with her smooth fair skin—that Irish heritage from the Shannons—and her brilliant dark eyes, made her look like a painting. Financial worries and heartache had been able to turn her hair white, but they had not been able to deaden her interest in life. More and more, as troubles increased, she had turned to her

books and her studies for relief, for forgetting. She was keener than ever, these days, about problems of the larger world, about ancient civilizations, and old ruins, and weird writings, and the coming together of nations. Always she had made a study of flowers, and birds, and bees, and since coming to the coast, she had added the study of shells and sea life.

It was a comfort to think that Mamma, in her restricted circumstances, was still having, in a measure, her own life: she had not become hopeless or drab in the midst of her problems. Her mind was still virile, her interest keen. And it was also a comfort to know that she did not hang breathless on the lives of her children; that should some cataclysm wipe every one of us off the earth, she would still be able to take an interest in the thing of living, in studying and research. Life didn't mean children, only, to Mamma; it meant children plus her own personal interests

Mothers of some of the girls I knew found their lives so completely in those of their daughters that these girls never experienced that soaring freedom that had always been such joy to my soul; no weights in my skirts. And still I knew, of course, that Mamma cared, intensely, that when any one of us should succeed in following our dreams, it would be as if she were succeeding, and if we should fail, it would be her failure. But she didn't fret and fuss about us or worry about things happening to us. She took it for granted that we had gumption enough to carry out what we conceived, and left us to do it in our own way. This freed us.

But, as the train bore me on, that picture of Mamma

stayed: patient, among her children, patiently waiting for what life was to do to them. I would see to it that life would not do anything to *one* of them, at least, that would keep that one from doing things for her. This, as the train swept on, was my most intense desire: to restore Mamma to ease and freedom from strain and worry.

CHAPTER XII

All the way to Chicago I sat with that suitcase on my lap. I carried it into the diner with me. At night I had the porter put it into my berth. He seemed especially tender with it, lifting it gently. He was a big joyous coloured man, making me think of our old George in Missouri, and I trusted him implicitly. When my spine ached unendurably with the long sitting upright, he would bring me another pillow—seeing me fidget, trying to find a comfortable position. Several men on the train offered to put the suitcase in the rack overhead, and one even offered to carry it back and forth to the diner, but I would let no one touch it.

But, in spite of that aching spine, I was happy—oh, so happy! Rolling wheels were carrying me steadily out into the big world—full of things! St. Paul was the first break in the dead level of my bliss: I had to change cars, and would lose the kind porter. I told him as I was getting off that I didn't know how I would ever get along without him to help me.

"There'll always be someone to he'p *you,* li'l' missy," he said, with a heartening grin, and turned to his next passenger.

His words cheered me, and I strode ahead, carrying the suitcase.

Another train and another day, and I was nearing Chicago. My heart began to pound. Over and over the wheels turned, bearing me steadily nearer my publisher,

and Life. And then I was in the great gray flatness that is Chicago. Oh, so many buildings, and so solid, just a great gray flatness solid with buildings. But it was exciting, every smallest detail. I pressed my face close to the pane and stared out. Pretty soon, I said, I'll be a part of all that grayness. It's my city.

Hours of it, it seemed, and then we roared and creaked and groaned into the station, and it was all out for Chicago!

Still carrying the suitcase, I followed on with the human stream. And now everyone seemed to be going in a different direction; it was as if a huge boot had kicked over a human ant heap. I felt gaspy and excited.

I got into a taxicab and told the driver to take me to the Palmer House, because of the floor paved with silver dollars. I had heard about it, and I wanted to walk on a floor paved with silver dollars. I sat up very straight, trying to look like any ordinary traveller in a cab, but I felt queer and giggly.

The Palmer House floor was a disappointment: the dollars were only at the corners of the flagstones in the barber shop. This was my first disillusionment. But I registered just the same and went on to my room. It was a long room with a high ceiling and a big wide bed; but I couldn't stop to observe anything else. That spine was screaming for relief. I lay quickly flat on the floor. It always had to have a hard surface; a bed wasn't so good.

When I was comfortable again, which was in a very few minutes, I dressed in my prettiest outfit, a navy blue challis with white polka dots, made with circular ruffles from top to toe; and a wide white leghorn hat

covered with floppy poppies. With the manuscript under my arm, I started out to find my publisher, Mr. Andrew McNally, the president of the firm of Rand, McNally & Co. I should never in the world have found the publishing house but for the help of the big Chicago policemen. At every corner in the maze of streets and crowds I would ask again for directions. These policemen were so invariably kind and helpful that I straightway adopted the whole force as chief of first aids.

At length I reached the publishing house—a huge gray pile—and went down three steps into what seemed to me to be a sort of half-underground succession of caves, low-vaulted, dark, interminable, and illuminated with green lights from long glass tubes that made the people back of desks and slipping about with papers in their hands and green eye shades over their eyes look like animated corpses. I got the feeling that restive people in their graves had got up and come back to finish their interrupted tasks.

I felt shivery, but I poked along from aisle to aisle until someone stopped me and asked whom I wanted to see.

"I want to see Mr. Andrew McNally," I said.

"Have you an appointment?"

"Yes." I said "Yes" naturally, because in my mind I had the appointment. I had made it, out West, when I first started on my novel. I had been having that appointment for a long time, now. It was one of the facts in my life. That Mr. McNally didn't know about it was a mere detail.

The man led me through more space, past more tubes of green light, past little gates, past men and

women adding up figures and sorting papers and reading manuscripts—all with green eye shades on—then directed me to a door.

I pushed it open cautiously, stepped in, and closed it softly behind me. I was in a large, flat sort of room, low-ceilinged, pancakey looking. And 'way across at the farther side, back of a large flat-topped desk, sat a small white-haired old gentleman with gold-rimmed spectacles across his nose. All at once the distance between us seemed interminable, as if I could never make it. The old gentleman looked up, and kept on looking with something of growing surprise, as I hurried along toward him, all ruffly and flopping, the ruffles flopping, the leghorn hat flopping, the poppies flopping—and then I was by his side.

He looked stern, waiting for me to speak.

"I've brought you a novel," I said breathlessly; and I smiled, for he seemed very old and unsmiling, and I wanted to put him at his ease.

"Who sent you in here?" he asked coldly.

"Nobody—I chose you; out of all the publishers in the world, I chose you."

He stared; then—"Sit down," he said.

I drew the chair up close to the desk, perched on its edge, and began excitedly to unwrap the precious manuscript.

"Just a moment," he said, putting out his hand and stopping me. "Where do you come from?"

"The West," I told him promptly. I didn't say what part, because I thought he might have a preference for some certain locality, and he could take his choice.

"Um—I rather thought so." His gaze lifted to my

hat. "I've got a ranch out West; it hasn't done much so far but raise poppies. However, if I was a young man, I'd go West and live on a ranch."

"I should think you would," I agreed heartily.

"Will you tell me," he went on in his measured way, "how you came to choose me for your—publisher?"

My fingers itched to get on with the unwrapping—we were losing time—but I waited. "Because," I said, "you've educated me. Seems to me I've studied Rand, McNally schoolbooks all my life; some of them I know almost by heart. And I thought," I added, feeling daring, but I just had to say it, "that you might like your own product."

He put his thin white fingers to his lips, coughed, a-hemmed several times. Then, "Is it a good story?" he asked.

"Fine!" I told him, and began again to unwrap it, so he could see just how good it was.

But he held out his hands for it and I gave it to him. Then he began slowly to close the wrappings, to tie the string, and my heart sank.

"Leave your story with me," he said. "I will read it myself and let you know what I think of it."

"When?"

"Are you in so great a hurry?" He smiled now.

"Well, I'd like to know as soon as possible—in a few days, anyhow." And added, "I just have a week."

He again looked at me in that measuring way he had, then he said, "Come in a week from to-day; this is Wednesday—that will be next Wednesday, at ten-thirty."

He rose, and the interview was over.

CHAPTER XIII

It was a week to be got through, some way; but it wasn't time that meant anything. I knew he would take my story, of course—any publisher would. But still it was an intense week of waiting. I rode on street cars, visited parks, tramped about, only half hearing or seeing, and saying to myself: "Now one more hour has gone, pretty soon it will be one more day, then I can sleep all night, and be twenty-four hours closer to Wednesday."

On the great morning I again dressed with care and called at the publishing house. This time no questions were asked—I was allowed to find my way directly to Mr. McNally. I pushed back his door very cautiously: yes, there he sat, just as I had left him. It hadn't been a dream or anything. Jubilantly, I almost ran across that terrible space that separated us, and, stopping at his desk, looked my question desperately into his eyes.

He smiled at me. "Sit down, sit down."

I sat down, but it wasn't very solid sitting down: I was pushing all the time to the front of the chair.

"Well, my dear," he said in his deliberate old-man's way, "I've decided to bring out your book."

A thunderbolt might have struck me. It was what I expected, but I was stunned past speech. Again and again I opened my mouth, tried to speak, tried to

thank him, tried to tell him how wonderful it was, but not a sound would come.

"It will need a little editing—books always do," he added kindly. He was now scribbling names on cards. "See this man—he will go over it with you, get it ready for the printer. And you may choose your own cover and binding, if you wish. Have a talk with the artist," and he handed me the cards.

I could take the cards, but still I couldn't speak.

And now he was on his feet, and now he was bowing. and now he was sitting down again, separating his coat tails in his careful old-man's way—but even yet I couldn't speak, couldn't utter a sound.

I turned and went out.

No use to stop and see the editor and the artist when I couldn't speak, when my vocal organs were completely paralyzed. I'd have to come back later. I went out on to the street, walking as on air, not in the least knowing where I was going. Soon I became conscious of passers-by smiling at me—men smiled, and women smiled, and newsboys smiled, and big blue-coated policemen smiled. And then I caught a glimpse of myself in a large plate-glass window and discovered that I was going like a streak of wind, all the circular ruffles, and the leghorn hat, and the poppies flopping, while I grinned from ear to ear like some great Cheshire cat before a bowl of cream.

The street was no place for me. I hurried to the hotel, went to my room, threw myself on the good old Palmer House bed, and bounced on the springs for a full hour, before I had bounced out enough joy to get my tongue loose. But when I could speak

again there wasn't a soul to speak to, no one to whom I could run with the great good news. I sent Mamma a telegram. Years after, I came across this passage marked in her Bible:

> Lord, now lettest thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word;
> For mine eyes have seen thy salvation.

And in the margin the notation:

> Read the day I received news of Anne's book.

The next day I again visited the publishing house; and this time I met the man who was to do the editing: a tired-looking man with a high bald forehead and thick crinkly black hair and beard. The dreadful green lights gave him the same corpsy look the other workers had, but they couldn't rob him of a very fine look, some way—sensitive and fine. I learned later that he was an Amherst man who had all his life wanted to write novels. He had studied in London, had read all the masters, and, like Stevenson, played the "sedulous ape" to them all. The fire to create burned in him like a flame. He now looked at me as if I were something amusing in the day's dull routine—certainly nothing to be taken seriously. Already he was going over my story.

"You—ah—mean to write other novels, I take it?" he said in his drawly way, his gray eyes twinkling. He had a hesitation in his speech that would have been a stammer had it gone farther.

"Certainly," I said, drawing up my chair.

"I rather thought so. Then let me make a suggestion: with the next ones leave out all punctuation marks. Just junk them at the close. It's so much easier to put them in right in the first place than to take them all out and put them in again."

I met his eyes steadily; I knew he was laughing at me.

"What's so terribly wrong with my book?" I demanded, drawing up closer so I could see what he was doing to it.

"Nothing," he hastened to assure me. "It's really quite remarkable, for a first book. I find little to change but the punctuation. You seem to have been hurried, or uncertain, about that."

"It's the typewriter," I explained. "I was just learning, and I couldn't always hit the key I wanted; and it took too long to erase. Anyway, aren't punctuation marks merely to help you read the story? And can't you read it all right?"

"I certainly can," he agreed, with emphasis, but still with that amused look. "It's a good story; I doubt if you'll ever do a better; everybody has one book in him, you know."

"Have you?"

"I hope so—many. Where did you get your plot?"

I tapped my forehead.

"Have you ever tried reading old stories for plots?"

"Why, no, of course not! Use someone else's plot?"

This was astonishing doctrine to me; I thought the joy of writing was in creating: I couldn't imagine any joy in borrowing.

"It's a very good way," he insisted. "There are just

so many possible plots in the world, you know," he said now, a little tiredly, as if he had said it many times in classes, or something.

I didn't know. I had no theories, had never heard any expressed about the technique of writing.

"You have good points," he went on. "You apparently have plot sense; and you are concise, and your characters—all but your leading man—are real people."

"What's the matter with my leading man?"

"He's too angelic; they don't come that way."

"You didn't know my father."

He looked at me for the first time rather studyingly; then he smiled: "Was your father, honestly, so angelic as all that?"

"He wanted to be; it was in his mind; but lots of the time he was overtired, and he never stopped working and helping people to be more comfortable on the earth; never stopped for pain, or nerves, or weariness, or anything; just kept on going, and doing for people. And the war had been hard on him, hard on his nerves, so sometimes he felt like smashing things, and almost did. But deep inside, all by himself—he was angelic."

"I see," he said, and a tender smile spread over his own tired face. "A child is coming in my home," he went on dreamily, sort of absently. "I wonder if he will ever think of his father like that."

"If he has that kind of a father," I said, "and he knows him. I *knew* my father."

"I see," he said again.

"What else is wrong with my book?" I demanded.

"Such a furious young person!" Again he smiled amusedly. "Why the haste?"

"Is that a fault?"

"Yes. Writing takes time. Life takes time. Nothing worth bothering to do can be hurried. An East Indian may force a plant to bloom while you watch it, but it dies as quickly."

I sighed; I had no time, ever.

"But here is the artist." Another man had come to the desk, also corpsy looking from the green lights. I was introduced.

"I know now what I want," I said. "I want a sand-coloured cover, with a bunch of sagebrush on it, and a lark rising just above with a song in his throat."

The artist had never seen sagebrush, but he said he would look it up at the Art Institute. He treated me like a real author and seemed anxious to please me.

"And now," said the editor, "here's your contract ready for you to sign." I promptly signed it. "Don't you ever read your contracts?" he asked, again with that look of amusement that I didn't like. He handed me another copy. "This one's for you to keep."

"It's so long, I'll read it when I get back to the hotel," I told him, stiffly.

"After it's signed," he said, and laughed again. I couldn't see what he was laughing at. "See here," he said kindly. "You've got quite a dramatic situation in this book. You might want to make it into a play or a movie. Better add a line that you're to keep your dramatic rights."

I added the line.

"And now," he said, "I believe that is all for the present."

"When will my book be out?" I asked, rising.

"Very soon; we are pushing it for fall publication. You will want to read proof, of course."

I supposed I should; but "Do you like my title?" I had to ask.

"Very good—original. Where did you get it?"

"Why, here, of course," and I again tapped my head. It was a funny writing world, with people getting plots and titles and everything from someone else. I couldn't understand it.

CHAPTER XIV

My next thought was to go in and thank Mr. Andrew McNally, but strangely, since he had actually become my publisher, I felt shy about approaching him. I told myself that I must think up the nicest thing possible to say to him. And then I remembered that the book would soon be out: I would wait, and take a copy in to him, and lay it on his desk, and thank him for all the wonder of it with it lying there between us, the lark and the sagebrush and everything. And I would write something wonderful in it just for him. And some day I would erect a beautiful monument to him.

I felt it so deeply, what he had done. Yes, I would go to him with the book when it was out, but some day there would be the monument. But in the meantime I must leave the hotel. It was too expensive. On another visit to the publishing house, the editor suggested a boarding place out by Jackson Park. One of the bookkeepers lived there and found it very comfortable. He would give me a line to him. I now had no idea of returning home.

And so I secured a room in this very attractive boarding house near the Chicago Beach Hotel. It cost me only $6.50 a week, including board. The room belonged to a young woman who had gone to Europe

for the summer. She wanted to hold it so she could have it when she got back, so she paid for the room and I for board only.

It was a charming, homey sort of a house, with the kind of people in it who would have lived at the Chicago Beach Hotel could they have afforded it, but as they couldn't they lived as near it as possible. Immediately I met the Rand, McNally bookkeeper and was placed at his table. He was tall and slim and dark and good-looking, with nice hands and a manner something like you think young lords must have but don't. I always remembered Dottie's young lord cousin, in Yakima, who was just thoroughly nice. The bookkeeper had a chum who was short and thickset and homely, but awfully smart. It showed in his eyes —they were small and shone so; and in the way he gnawed at his nails when he was thinking intensely about something. He was terribly intense.

Right away the three of us became good friends; and evenings, after dinner, we would promenade up and down the lake front, the men smoking, and all of us talking about how to make a lot of money *quick*. They had been chums always, having lived on adjoining farms in Iowa; and they had gone to business college together, and had come to the city together seeking their fortunes. They had worked up to $25 a week, but now were at a standstill and didn't see any way to take the next step. And they must make great fortunes. The Rand, McNally bookkeeper had fallen in love with a rich girl, and he just must make a fortune so that her father would let him marry her. He never talked about a thing but that girl, and how

lovable she was. And she must have been, for he told such nice things about her.

The other wanted to go in the wholesale tea and coffee business; he knew he could make a fortune in it, but he must have capital to start. And neither had a penny but their salaries and farmer fathers who could not help them.

"I've simply got to get it," said the short one, one evening, after having gone into the details of all he could accomplish if he only had a little capital.

"Well, I've got to get it, too," asserted the Rand, McNally one; and sighed deeply.

"And so have I," I declared with equal positiveness. We were all tramping along, our hands clasped behind our backs, our eyes fixed. But when I spoke, the bookkeeper looked at me rather pityingly.

"You mustn't count on much in the way of royalties from that book," he said. "Books don't always mean royalties."

"Mine will."

"I hope so."

"Well, don't you count on marrying that girl, either, if you've got to make a fortune to get her," put in the short one. "You can't make a fortune unless I do first; you've never made a cent yet, or had an advance, except as I've helped you. You'd be back on the farm digging potatoes this minute, but for me."

"Right-o," agreed the very good-looking and always amiable bookkeeper. "But don't you count too hard on a windfall of some kind, either."

The short one began to gnaw his nails; and we tramped on in silence. We all wanted an ice-cream soda, but we were saving too closely for that.

The next time I went to the publishing house, I asked the editor if books don't mean royalties.

"Some books do."

"And mine might not?"

"It's a gamble."

"But it's *got* to."

"Some writers who feel that way about it try different things. At this minute George Barr McCutcheon is over on State Street with his book *Graustark* under his arm. The first man to say to him, 'You're McCutcheon,' will get a dollar bill. It's all in this morning's papers. That's one way to fame."

"And you have to do crazy things like that?"

"When you're unknown."

"Will it make him known?"

"Yes, if he keeps it up."

"Is he a good writer?"

"Pretty good."

"Better than I?"

"Um—more sophisticated." Then he handed me my first galley proofs. In the excitement of seeing my story in type, I forgot all about royalties.

But I thought about them again pretty soon, for my funds were getting dangerously low. I simply could not send home for money: every time I even thought about it, an army of interest, taxes, assessments, and further payments on property filed before me like ghosts. Why, what was it I wanted money in

such a hurry for but to help relieve the financial tension at home? No, I could not send for money, no matter what happened. I might not be able to save the property, but I would *not* be a further burden on the family.

CHAPTER XV

I started out to find a job. I would go on a newspaper, just do anything at all, till my royalties began to come in, which was six months away, and if they didn't come in *fluently,* I'd keep on doing newspaper work. It was as simple as that. I called first to see Mr. Handy, of the *Tribune,* another tired-looking man in a small office back of a large desk, completely surrounded by newspapers. I wondered how he ever got out—if he ever did. Maybe he didn't; maybe he had his food handed across to him by one of the office boys. When I spoke to him, he lifted his head but not his shoulders.

I told him that I had called to get a job on his paper, that I wanted to be a newspaper woman. I told him all about my novel.

He yawned.

I pressed the matter.

He suppressed the next yawn.

I pushed closer to the desk, was insistent, told him I was in the city alone, and nearly out of money, and *must* have a job.

"You don't want to be a newspaper woman," he now said, in a patiently kind sort of voice, as though he had said it often. "It isn't a job for a nice girl."

I said I guessed I wasn't nice, then, for I *did* want to be a newspaper woman.

"Ever been one?"

No, I admitted I hadn't, but I was sure I could do it. I had written a book, and I just loved to write, and——

"See here," he broke in, "you don't know what you're talking about. Why, I wouldn't be turned loose in Chicago myself, with all my experience, without a job. I would know I would starve to death. You can't do it. Go home to your mother."

With that he dropped his head again and was instantly miles away in the manuscript he was reading.

I turned and went out. But I was furious. He'll be sorry, I told myself fiercely—good and sorry. Just wait till the day comes when he *wants* me to write for his paper; begs and begs me to, and I won't do it! I'll write for every other paper in the world, but never, never his! Anyway, there are plenty of other papers.

I tried the *Inter-Ocean,* but I couldn't get to the editor, the *Record-Herald,* with the same result, the *Journal*—I tried them all, till at last there was just one newspaper left—the *Daily News.*

I told myself that the *Daily News* would be the one. I felt it in my bones. Why hadn't I gone there first and saved myself the humiliation of all the refusals! Down a narrow hall, past a row of wire cages, up some dingy steps, down some more, along a passageway, and I ran plump into the editor's office boy on guard, eating his lunch of bread and bologna. I had had sorry experience with office boys. They were czars. I backed quickly away. I would wait till the boy left. I walked down the hall again, loitered near the wire cages, wondered if it made people wild to sit in them all

day or merely tame, and presently saw the office boy dash past with a handful of copy. I darted quickly in the opposite direction, and, all out of breath, reached the managing editor's office.

As I pushed open the door, I prayed for the right words; but I am afraid my guardian angel was not attending strictly to business that day. An elderly gentleman sat back of a small cluttered desk; a gentleman in a skull cap. He looked up—and glowered.

I began on my story, about the new book soon to be out, and being in Chicago alone, and just having to have a job. He didn't even lift his head—only his eyes, looking up over his glasses: "What have you done on a newspaper?" he asked.

"Nothing, really," I admitted, "but——"

"What do you think you can do?"

"Oh, I don't know—most any of it. I'm not particular."

"For instance?" He tapped the editorial page of that day's *News,* open before him.

"I don't know," I said. "None of it looks hard, but I've never read the *News.*"

With that he snatched at the sheet and shouted: "You've never read the *News?* Never read it, and think you can write for it? Want to write for a paper that you've never read? Go! Go! Go! Write for the papers that you *do* read!"

He was trembling with rage, half rising, pointing to the door.

But I couldn't go. This was my last chance.

"I never read *any* newspapers," I screamed back. "Mamma never cared much about our reading news-

papers. She always said there was too much gossip and scandal in them! She was particular! She even burned Byron as soon as we girls began to grow up; and Henry the Eighth and his Court; and it was the only book in the library that I was ever just crazy to read. For years she kept it on the top shelf, and then she burned it! And when you've had a mother like that, you're not to blame! And I've only been in Chicago a few weeks!"

I knew I was talking wildly, but I couldn't stop it. "I'll begin reading the *News* to-day, honest I will, and I'll read every word of it—if—if you'll only give me a job!"

He was staring at me, his lips trembling, his eyes batting queerly, for all the world as if he had a perfect idiot in his office and didn't in the least know the technique for handling idiots. But my rage had now died down.

"Let me try, Mr. Faye," I begged. "You don't have to keep me if I can't do it. Just let me try."

He turned to the newspaper still clutched in his hand and smoothed it flat. "That column," he now said, more mildly. "I need someone on that column. If you've got brains, I can use you. If not, I can't. Now go!"

I carefully noted the title of the column. It was "Over the Teacups." Then I went.

Downstairs among the wire cages I bought a month's back copies, carried them home, and studied the column. It was humour, the lightest sort. Each one was a complete little story of some everyday incident, beginning with: "The blue-eyed girl said to the brown-eyed girl," or "The girl in the raglan said to the girl

in the tailored suit," or "The pretty little brunette said to the big blonde"—and so on, leading into a story about the new dining room carpet that Father bought for a surprise and no one liked, or what happened to the egg money in the teapot when Aunt Liza came and insisted on making her own tea, or everybody salting the mush because the cook never did, and the complications that followed—each thinking he alone was the guilty party—or luggage difficulties, or marriageable bachelors that wouldn't marry, or brothers that were pests to their big sisters, or that awful person that bosses, or gives advice—all just the most everyday happenings of everyday people and homes, just what people would naturally do if they were that kind of people. And that was all that was wanted of me, when I had great dreams, and ideas, and theories, and was so willing to tell the world all about them!

I buckled down to it, however, and tried to write the stuff; but it wouldn't come. Every girl I started blithely on her way ended in a hospital or on her deathbed. Every man, if he was a father, died and left all his little children alone in the world. Every mother ended in disappointment over her children's lives, or buried them all. Just nothing would be funny.

And yet I was boundingly happy, sobbing away over my unfortunate characters, dramatizing their sorrows. I played all the rôles. And after I had written a thing with so much feeling, I would believe in it absolutely, I would *know* it was good, because I had felt it so, had had such a wonderful time weeping over it. But even I had to admit it wasn't funny.

I finally decided it would be easier to change the editor's policy than to change myself into a funny writer. So I chose several of my best little sketches, copied them carefully, and mailed them to Mr. Faye, reminding him in an accompanying letter of my visit and his promise.

They all came back with the following:

This matter is well written but it is off key so far as the *Daily News* is concerned. We do *not* want intense, strained, dramatic, melodramatic matter, and we do want light, breezy matter with smiles (if not laughs) in it. We seek to entertain, not tragically to impress. Yours, CHAS M. FAYE.

I sat gloomily brooding over my little stories. After a while I opened my purse and turned it upside down: I had exactly $11.25. Well, there was nothing else to do—I just had to be funny. I put on my hat and went for a trolley ride; maybe I could think of something funny if I got out of doors. I rode and rode and rode, but nothing came—nothing but worry over the situation.

CHAPTER XVI

I dragged wearily home and there found a call from the publishing house: with the presses ready to start printing my book, an announcement had appeared of a prize fighter's book with my title. I must get a new one quickly—one containing the same number of letters, if possible, to avoid delay in resetting.

I took all the titles I had and hurried down to the editor. None was the right length; and, anyway, when I consulted the title catalogue, every one of them was there, maybe with a slight change, but there in effect. I was appalled at the apparent impossibility of making any new arrangement of words. All the afternoon I worked. Finally, the editor, who had been helping me, said: "Why not use your leading character's name?" He was counting the letters. "And, by George, if it isn't exactly the right length." So that was the way my first book came to be named *Eugene Norton.*

When I reached home, I found my two friends hastily packing. The good-looking one had received a wire from his prospective father-in-law asking him to come to New York—presumably for inspection—and he was so nervous he could scarcely pack. I helped fold shirts, and ties, and underwear, while his friend gave advice.

But the other wasn't hearing: he was packing the girl's picture and stopping to gaze at it. He was to see

her so soon! His friend was also packing: he was leaving for motives of economy. The two had occupied the one room, and he couldn't afford to keep it alone.

The interesting thing, the almost unbelievable thing, only that it is true and has to be believed, is that they both eventually won out: the one marrying the girl he loved, and besides, by his own shrewdness, or good luck, or something, making a fortune in Wall Street; the other getting himself established in business, in the identical business he had had his eyes on all along, and I saw his name on the door as "president," all in a very few years. The history of these two young men who descended on Chicago from farms, without a cent but with a set purpose, has always remained an inspiration to me. It shows what you can do with a set purpose when the purpose is set enough.

The young woman to whom my room belonged returned from Europe, and soon I, too, was packing. I found a new home in an old-fashioned street on the West Side. It was too far out for business, and too close in to be fashionable, so it was given over to rooming and boarding houses. I was to pay $3.50 a week for my room. The landlady, who had two children to keep in school on roomers, seemed satisfied with one week's payment in advance, so I moved in.

Immediately I loved my new home. The moment I stepped in and turned the key in the lock, I felt at ease. It was a large back parlour, filled with heavy overstuffed old-fashioned furniture, and it had a small alcove which I was to use for a bedroom. It was a room, some way, that you could snuggle into. And there were two large windows overlooking a back

yard—a nice roomy back yard. It was outdoorsy, some way—close to earth. And there was a large study table that I could use for writing. But where was my food to come from? I admit I hadn't the slightest idea, for I had but $1.35 left.

Happily, right away, in my prowlings about the neighbourhood, I came across a huge biscuit factory, where I could buy, fresh each day, a great bagful of broken biscuits—the ones injured in removal from the pans and therefore not to be packed—for *five cents*. I pounced on them, carried them to my rooms, and stocked my larder. And I laughed to think how, at home, we had felt so poor because we could no longer have saddle horses, and now I felt so rich because I could have such a large sackful of nice crisp biscuits for five cents! Everything is certainly a matter of comparison.

Having established the culinary department, I placed my typewriter, got out paper and notes, and sat down to begin work. I put my fingers on the keys: "Now, be funny," I commanded. "Go on, be funny! That's your job!"

But nothing started.

At last I sprang up and seized my hat: "I'll go out and find something funny," I said.

At the front door, an elderly lady, small and plump like a partridge, and shabby about the edges, though with an eye for appearances, stopped me. She had the front parlour, she said, on the other side of the folding doors from me. Also a husband.

"You all alone?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Aren't you ever afraid?"

"What of?"

"Men."

"Men?"

"Yes, men: don't they ever stare at you on the street or speak to you?"

"I never thought to notice."

She looked at me incredulously: "Well, if they ever do, I've got a sure cure."

"What is it?"

"Turn squarely around and stare back, from the top of their heads to their toes; then look away and turn up your nose as if you didn't care a bit for what you'd seen. Every man that tries to strike up an acquaintance with a pretty girl is vain. And when you wound his vanity you wound him in his most vital spot. He'll turn as red as a turkey's wattles and hurry off."

"Did you ever try it?"

"Lots of times, when *I* was a pretty young girl. I was married at eighteen, and my mother-in-law told me how to cure them; and it never failed."

"I hope I'll have a chance to try it," I said, "It would be fun."

"Well, don't seek it," she cautioned sharply, "or I'll be in the position of the mother who had to leave her children alone and warned them not to put beans up their noses."

"What happened? I never heard of her."

"They all did, of course."

I had to laugh: she was funny, and life was really

funny, when you got to thinking about it; and surely there'd be a funny little story pretty soon.

"Looking for a job?"

"Yes, in a way."

She sighed deeply: "So's my husband; they say he's too old. And he's not!" She snapped it out temperishly. "Just because a man's hair is gray! I think I'll dye it!"

"And everyone seems to think I'm too young. They tell me to go home to my mother. Could I bleach mine?"

We laughed together then, and I ran on down the steps. A cool Lake Michigan breeze caught me in the face, and I suddenly realized that already I was needing warmer clothes.

Though I was in "walking distance," it was quite a long walk to State Street. Still, I was merely looking for something funny to happen, and it could happen anywhere. I didn't mind the walk—if only my spine wouldn't give out. I could usually count on about two hours before it threw me flat.

I walked down town and along State Street looking for something funny. The wind was blowing a gale, and everyone was rushing along, holding fast to bundles and hats—the hats pinned on with great spikes of pins—and their long skirts whipping about them. They looked funny, all right. It struck me that a man from Mars would be highly amused at the way earth people clothed themselves. But this wouldn't make any kind of a funny story for the *Daily News,* that went into all their homes, and was read by all the tired business men who kept themselves tired out

in order to dress their womenkind in this ridiculous fashion. Mr. Faye didn't want his people laughed *at*, but *with*.

I tried a cheap restaurant; ordered a big baked apple and a bun, ate slowly; but nothing funny happened. At last I picked up my check and started toward the cashier's cage. Several were ahead of me, but the line was blocked by a very blond man who was ogling the cashier—a pinkish girl with round baby eyes. She had shot out his change, but he wouldn't move on. He was being very impressive, and she was impressed all right, but she wanted to get on with her business of shooting out change and was considerably fussed about it. The boss might be looking. Then a man in the line had a stroke of genius: he reached up and turned on the electric fan that had been turned off because of the cooler weather, and instantly the sudden whir of air swooped in under the blond man's very blond toupee, lifting it clear off his head, and sending it swirling round and round with the fan, exposing the pinkest, baldest, shiningest dome you ever saw! Everyone howled with laughter, howled till they were mopping tears from their eyes, while they made wild grabs at the toupee each time it came around, like a game.

I howled, too, but I hurried away, for I had my funny story. If that was the kind of thing that made everybody laugh, then all I had to do was to tell it so every reader would see it just as I had, and they would laugh too.

I got home as quickly as ever I could, and on the way a little story came to me into which to fit the inci-

dent. But I didn't write it on my nice new typewriter; for that beastly spine was screaming for rest. I slammed and locked the door and lay quickly down on the floor. As the ache lessened, I propped a book against my knees and scribbled off the story. Later, I made a few changes, copied it, and mailed it to Mr. Faye.

He accepted it.

Oh, joy of joys, I now knew how! And I knew that I knew how. I'd caught the knack. I received $5.00 for it. It almost filled a column. My name was not used. Only Mr. Faye and myself in all the world knew that the story that men going home from business on the street cars were laughing at was mine. But, oh, the rapture of seeing them laugh! Seeing that smile begin to curl their lips as their eyes ran down the column. I began dimly to wonder if it wasn't as fine a thing to make people laugh as to make them weep.

Feverishly, I now set to work: I rode on street cars, visited the commonest eating places, department stores, and tea rooms; was steadily on a quest for something funny. I ceased trying to *think* of funny things, and *looked* for them instead. Looked for them in little everyday acts of people—shoeblacks, waiters, salesgirls; I listened in on conversations when I was apparently buying a pocket handkerchief or ordering a sandwich. I visited the noonday lunch "rest rooms" established by club women for business girls, and caught the stories in the buzz of talk.

I got on splendidly. The nice part was that Mr. Faye invariably wrote on the back of each rejected manuscript just what was the matter with it: "A news

story already told by all the papers"; "There's a sting in this—be kind"; "Preachy; advice not wanted"; and so on.

But a great many he kept.

I now had two shrines of worship: my publisher and my editor.

I was very gay hearted and wrote buoyant letters home, reporting Chicago as the dearest spot on earth, with the most perfect people and the grandest climate. I loved the crispness of the air, the buffeting winds; it seemed to me everything was just fanning me into life, and expression, and success. Nothing could stop me now!

CHAPTER XVII

And then the book came out: my book, my precious little child, going away from me at last, out into the world all by itself. But then I thought, cheering up, it's been a good world to me, and it will be to my book. All those things to fear and dread out in the great world all alone just didn't seem to me to be there. I carried the six presentation copies to my rooms and, holding them in my arms, loved them. The artist had not caught the look of sagebrush very well—it was more like a stumpy live-oak tree, and the larks like hawks hovering above it. But the dedication—to Papa—was beautiful. I loved it, loved it all, opened page after page, slowly, saw a misspelled word and felt crushed, saw a twisted sentence and was afraid to read on. I might find something else wrong.

I mailed five of the copies West. The other was for Mr. McNally. I would go to see him now. I wrote out an inscription for his book, but it sounded stiff. I really wanted to throw my arms about his neck and cry a little—but you can't do that to a publisher. I tried to think of something adequate, something lovely enough. The monument would come some day, of course, but now the right words. I wanted to send all through him the same sort of a glow of happiness that he had given me—make him feel compensated for

all the days he had had to sit indoors back of a desk being a publisher.

Before I found a way, he died.

Andrew McNally's death affected me deeply. I had built up to him, some way, and now he wasn't there. I had never told him how wonderful he had been to me, and now I never could. Once more nothing was funny in the world. I would sit before the typewriter trying to be funny, but the tears would fill my eyes. It was heartbreaking that people had to die this way. The old sadness filled me. The old sense of tragedy in all living. Achievement was useless, for no matter how much things might begin to come right in the world, someone would die, the very one, perhaps, for whom rightness was most important, and you couldn't do a thing about it.

And still the old earth went on around, and bills came due, and there was no way for me to meet them but to be funny. I would get the outline of a funny story in my mind and try to laugh at it, try to feel it, sort of get it into my veins, as I had to, to get the effect; but invariably my face would all crumple up, instead of smiling, and my head would go down on the machine, and I'd be sobbing my heart out.

One day, while trying desperately to think of something funny enough to smile over and get the smile into my copy, there flashed in my first and only visit to Mr. Faye's office, the absurdity of it, of my approach, and of his rage. I had learned, afterward, that Mr. Faye, from his long concentrated devotion to his paper, had become a bundle of nerves, and that no one who knew better ever afflicted him with calls and

interruptions. That with all his kindness of heart—and more than one successful magazine writer owed a great deal to the same sort of criticism he was so steadily giving me—he was too terribly on edge for human contact. And he wouldn't go away and take a long rest, such was his sense of responsibility to his paper.

I had learned all these things, and I sympathized with him, for I understand that nerve strain, that thing of holding on when you were ready to drop. And I appreciated everything he did for me, treasuring every smallest bit of writing he sent me. It is all in my treasure chest to-day.

But notwithstanding all this, while trying to feel funny about something, and with the habit of turning everything into copy, that first visit of mine to Mr. Faye's office came back, and I began to smile over it, then to write.

I made it into a story, heightening the effects somewhat, but sticking pretty closely to the main outline, and mailed it to him.

It was returned to me with a final note from the great editor, in which he said: "I shall not ask you to send in any more matter."

It seemed inconceivable, but in those few words I was dismissed from the paper.

CHAPTER XVIII

When it fully got into my head that I was dismissed from the *Daily News,* I called up Mr. Faye's office, meaning to apologize, but he would not see me. I wrote an apology, but it was ignored.

The more I mulled the thing over in my mind, the more certain I became that it was not personal, but only that he felt he could not trust his paper to me. I had shown poor judgment and bad taste: making fun of raw nerves, making fun of the nerves of a man standing when he was ready to drop. Oh, I could see it all, and once more I nearly died of heartbreak.

I was now right up against it: all I had to depend on was the check from a little natural history story that I did each week for the children's page in the *Record-Herald.* I had written about a hog I had known that went fishing for salmon, and a coyote that wasn't a coward, and the way ranchers hunt jack rabbits, and a horse that died of fright, and a cunning little bear named Bump. I got from three to four dollars for each of these stories, but I couldn't increase the number; and, anyway, they weren't easy stories to keep going, for they had to be true.

Through them, however, I had met Mr. Charles Dennis, editor of that department. Both Mr. Faye and Mr. Dennis, I had learned, had grown up from office boys to their present positions. But Mr. Dennis

was a different type—calm, and poised, and gentle of manner, with something of old-fashioned courtliness about him that reminded me of Papa. He was reserved but never cold. And he managed to do efficient work without wrecking his nerves.

I now called to see Mr. Dennis, but he had nothing to offer further than the Saturday story for children. I didn't tell him of my trouble with Mr. Faye, or that I had been doing the *News* stories, because I didn't know whether or not I was supposed to be writing for two papers at once, and I didn't know anybody to ask. I did all my work at home, mailing the stories, so I had no newspaper contacts save with the editors, and I couldn't afford to betray my ignorance of newspaper ethics to them. So when I didn't understand about a thing, I kept still until I did.

But the weekly children's story paid so little that I knew I must find something else to do. I tried writing a feature story and mailed it to the *Tribune*. It came back promptly with a letter from Mr. Handy saying I had tried too hard to write it well, and in so doing had weakened the story. I couldn't quite get it—just what was the matter.

Then I tried doing a longer, livelier story for the children's department of the *Record-Herald*. And it came back with a very nice letter from the editor saying it was "too blood and thundery" for their wee readers.

It was certainly discouraging, especially as I was now almost out of money again. I could not afford to spend any more time experimenting. I would simply have to find something else to do, something that

would pay my bills until I could get this newspaper business studied out. There was a way—other people made money writing for newspapers. It could be done, and I could do it, but it was going to take a little time.

What else could I do, in the meantime? For always there was that wretched spine to be considered. Writing, I could lie down whenever it became necessary. I had even become somewhat expert in writing while flat on my back, holding a tablet against my knees; and thoughts could always come, and I could jot them down. But an office position. . . . Besides, what had I to offer? I knew nothing of offices.

Looking over the want ads I caught the words "Press Clipping Bureau." Anything to do with the press always fascinated me. Maybe this was something I could learn, and manage somehow to do.

It was. A long, lean, damp-haired, discouraged-looking manager was willing to take me on. When? Now. I hung up my wraps and sat down before a sort of an easel, on which in the place of a canvas was a thick stack of newspapers through which I was to look for births, deaths, marriages, neuralgia, rheumatism, travel, names of noted people, etc., marking the items with a thick blue pencil.

When I finished one stack of papers, they were carried away and another flung down in their place. It was continual physical exercise: my right arm, stretched out full length, moved steadily up and down the columns, marking; while the left lifted off the marked pages with machine-like regularity. "Deaths" were in demand by mourning goods houses, "births"

by children's wear concerns, neuralgia, rheumatism, and other diseases by patent medicine firms. If you were sufficiently important to get into your home paper for any reason whatever, you eventually got on to one of our lists. I was to be paid $4.00 a week to start with, the pay to be increased as I gained speed, and decreased with lost time. The Bureau faced the elevated railroad, so that every seven minutes the trains went shrieking and grinding past, deafening every other sound. We talked largely in gestures.

At the end of the week I all but owed the firm money. That spine—I had to go to the rest room so often to relax on the couch for a few minutes. It seemed foolish to keep on with the work, and I think the sad-looking manager expected me to quit, but it was something to do, and I thought with practice I could get up speed enough to compensate for the minutes lost.

And then, too, I was interested. Papers, papers, papers—how many were printed! Hundreds of them! Some way, I had never before realized what a world of print we lived in. Sometimes in turning a sheet I would catch the gist of a local item 'way out in some Western town, or down South, or off in some New England village, and I'd smile over the wording, and get an idea for a short story. I became interested, too, in the number of syndicate stories used—short romances of from fifteen hundred to two thousand words, generally. Sometimes I clipped them, and at night read them. Intimate little stories, gossip, what he said, what she said and what the girl wore and what they ate and how they were married. We had been

held so strictly to the classics at home, and the best modern fiction, that I had not known there were such stories as these, or that editors wanted them. But they did, evidently, and they must pay for them. Why couldn't I do them? I made note of the syndicates, especially those I found most often; and I began jotting down plot ideas. The Bureau was really a wonderful mill through which story material was ground out.

And another thing, I found a friend right away: Hester, lily-white, with coal-black eyes and hair, slight and blue-veined, who would have been beautiful had she looked nourished. She was making seven dollars a week, and as soon as she learned the business, she was to be advanced to forewoman with better pay. The manager was a parishioner of her father's church, and he was giving her the opportunity. She became confidential—told me she was planning to go on the stage. There were eight children and she was the eldest. She was using every possible cent for dramatic lessons, and to have her teeth sawed off and new ones screwed on. The process was slow and painful as well as expensive.

"Why do it?" I asked her. She had slipped into the rest room to see if I was all right; for I had confided in her about the spine, and how I had to rest it almost every hour—the only person I ever told. "Your teeth are not bad."

"No, but they're not pretty."

"Must they be?"

"Yes, for the stage."

She was the most dispassionate mortal, apparently

without feeling for pain, or hunger, or romance in her own life—just a cold white flame of determination to make money and lift all her pretty little sisters into softer, gayer lives. "There's more money made on the stage than anywhere else," she told me. "I've looked into everything—even plumbing."

Her determination was like what the words "cold chisel" suggest: something that pushed against the grain, and pushed, and pushed, and pushed. All her teeth out, if necessary—anything; nothing mattered but to win. Her personal taste, I discovered, was for reading. Had it not been for the little sisters, she would have chosen a student's life, a cloistered sort of library existence.

Then, one night, she took me home with her: such a barny, empty sort of home, the church had provided for its pastor. But there were all the little sisters, just as joyful and giggly as any other little girls entering their teens, or near it, and not knowing any way but to be happy, being alive. One was exceptionally pretty, though beauty of a fragile, delicate-tinted kind seemed to run in the family; and oh, the tenderness of Hester when her eyes fell on this little sister! "Pretty one," she called her. It sounds affected, maybe, to tell about it, but it was very sweet, just the same. There had been a donation party, and the mother, hectic and thin—I could see she, too, had been a pretty fragile flower of a girl—was jubilant over a second-hand sewing machine the church ladies had given her. She wouldn't have to sew all the little dresses by hand any more. The father—tall and ascetic looking—was evidently unable to make ministering properly sup-

port so large a family. Strangely, he was perfectly in sympathy with his eldest daughter's ambition. I couldn't be sure whether he was just sick and tired of poverty, or was something of an actor himself; he had the look.

But with all the very evident strain to live and keep fed and clothed, there was a happy atmosphere about the family; there's something about large families that maybe compensates more than they know, or will know till they are all scattered, and each one off on his own, for the things they must so often do without. After that visit, I felt very close to Hester.

CHAPTER XIX

The Rand, McNally editor sent for me: "Where have you been?" he asked. "Hid off somewhere writing another book?" He still had an amused look in his eyes, as though he continued to regard me as something to be smiled over rather than taken seriously. I wouldn't tell him my problems. He might laugh or tell me to go home.

"Why?" I asked. "Do you want to pay me my royalties?"

"Freiburger of the *Saturday Evening Herald* wanted an interview, but we couldn't seem to locate you. He reviewed your book without it, has your picture on the cover. He thinks you're quite a find." He handed me the weekly sheet. There I was on the cover.

"But what does he *say?*" I demanded.

"Everything good. Read it. He wants to meet you; wants you to call at his office. Better run up—won't do you any harm."

But I was reading. . . . Yes, he had said *nice* things:

No one need be ashamed to read *Eugene Norton,* the first long story by Anne Shannon Monroe, who will certainly surprise every reader with her first venture into elaborate and involved fiction. Men and women alike being handled with great care and more consistency, grace, and style than is the lot of the average novelist with several books to his credit. . . . The people are real. . . .

Especially of interest is the elaboration of the character of Eugene Norton, the noble-minded and humane doctor. . . . The episodes are so delicately touched with the highest quality of human kindness that one pays them the tribute of the tear of joy. . . . There is not a word to spare, no superfluous description of people or scene. . . . As a first venture this story promises well. . . . Miss Monroe is far more brilliant and artistic as a writer than hundreds of others who have press agents and social sycophants to boom them in all sorts of harmful and ridiculous ways. . . .

I handed the paper back.

"Don't you like it?" the editor asked. "Most writers would be tossing their caps in the air."

"Yes, it's all right, I suppose. I'll go to see him."

I couldn't explain that I thought I had written a *strong* book, with ideas in it. I had dealt with divorce, and religion, and socialism, and I had expected people to *discuss* it, not merely be surprised that I could write a book at all.

"Well, go up and see Freiburger; and bring us your next book."

I promised, but without enthusiasm. Maybe there would never be a next book.

That night I read the other reviews, for the editor gave me a handful as I was leaving, but I failed to find what I was seeking. Nobody at all had noticed that I had *ideas*. They said the book had "decided strength," that there was "nothing in it to bring the blush of shame to the cheek of innocence," that it was "a modern tale of culture and refinement," that it was "infused with the best spirit of the West"; and one reviewer facetiously remarked that it was a "cheerful story of insane asylums and unrequited affections with

all the space between Berlin and Tacoma well covered," but no one at all mentioned my *ideas*.

I was let down, disillusioned; was it so impossible, then, to be understood? Would people forever see the thing you didn't think much about and slide over the thing that had been your message? Of course, it was my fault, in some way; I hadn't been able to get it across. I cried myself to sleep, with all the reviews clutched in my hands: I wasn't a successful novelist, I wasn't a successful newspaper woman, I wasn't such a very good press clipper—and my spine ached and ached.

From now on I spent the lunch hour looking for another job, for I was sure I'd be dismissed, and, anyhow, I must have more money. In this way I met Lyn. We were applying for the same job with about fifty other discouraged-looking girls. But Lyn didn't look discouraged, her purple eyes were bubbling over with amusement: a slim young girl in a blue middy suit who munched popcorn. I caught her watching me, then we both smiled and she spoke: "Looks hopeful, doesn't it?" she said.

"Hopeful?"

"Yes, as if we couldn't have it. I hate a job. But my brother says I've got to have one or go back to a dinky little town and live with my aunt; so I apply somewhere every day."

"Have you ever had one?" She looked so young—she was seventeen, I found later.

"Yes, but it didn't last. I took a course in business college, and they placed me. I hated it!"

"What do you love?"

"Boating: I won a cup in the Columbia yacht races; I sailed a catboat, Jo's. Jo's my brother. Come on, let's go sail now. We've done our best."

"But the job?"

"*I* don't want it, do you? And look at the girls who do. It would be a good deed to clear out."

I went with her, for it did look hopeless. "But I must get back to work," I said. "I've got a job now."

"What wretched luck! How came the old boy to take you on?"

"Don't you *have* to have a job?"

"Jo says I do; he says he won't have me running about the city, idle; that if I stay in town I've got to work. He put me through business college. It was his idea of taking care of his little sister. I'm an orphan, you see." She said it so brightly, as if it were a gift. "Are you?"

"A half one."

"It's better to be a whole one," she ran on, "then you have the old ladies worrying about you, and telling you what terrible goblins there are in the world to eat up little girls, and giving you good books to read, and good advice. One gave me a year's subscription to the *Christian Herald* when I left home for Chicago—my aunt lives only about an hour out—and I traded it to another girl for a ticket to a play I was crazy to see. The play was fine! And they all warned me about the wicked, cruel world, and how I'd appreciate all their goodness to me once I was out in it. They said men lurked in every corner ready to lure pretty girls to destruction, and I haven't been lured once! Have you?"

"I never can remember to notice; I guess I'm always thinking about something. But I've got a fine cure. I'll give it to you."

"Heavens, don't! I want to be lured. I want to run home screaming, some day, with a bad wicked man in pursuit! It would prove that I'm pretty and Jo always says I'm a fright, and he knows no man will ever take me off his hands. Jo's a pessimist. Oh, come on, it's a wonderful day to sail!"

"All right, I'll do it."

Soon she was darting into a shabby, sick-looking little shop on a side street for cookies. She had had no lunch. The dreary girl back of the counter brought from the window a plateful that had been advertising the place as a bakery—and attracting flies. They looked shrunken and discouraged. Lyn gazed at them disapprovingly. "They're home-made," quavered the girl.

"Oh, that's the trouble, is it?" said Lyn cheerfully. "Well, never mind, I've got some popcorn," and she darted out again.

We were quickly at the boat club; it was all wet and slippery about the edges, but it had a jolly atmosphere, and decorations, and waiters sliding about with trays filled with drinks and sandwiches, and men in white ducks, and pretty girls in sports clothes. Lyn lead the way to the *Vixen,* of which her brother was part owner, she explained. Her brother was not there; it seemed the bank required his services the same on fine sailing days as on others, which Lyn considered very unjust; but the men of the crew were her friends, and they hailed her joyfully.

She introduced me, and we settled down in the bow, and munched popcorn while the men made ready to put off.

"Captain Tommy's coming," Lyn said presently; and as I looked blank, she added, "Captain Tommy Lipton; that is what all the decorations are for. Look" —she sprang up and opened a cupboardy place— "here's the log. Want to read it? I've written most of it."

I began to read and was soon laughing heartily: all her funny little quips and turns of backward expression were there—something like Irish humour, quaint, whimsical, and always surprising.

"The boys are crazy about it," she went on, still munching popcorn. "They show it to every guest who comes aboard. They want me to write up everything about Captain Tommy. He's the hero of the whole world. Didn't you know it? Well, you know it now. The boys don't want me to get a job; just sail and keep the log. I wonder why brothers can't be as nice as other men. But Jo likes the log—anyway, he grins when he reads it, trying to hold his mouth still at the corners all the time. He doesn't want me to know."

"Lyn," I said suddenly, for already we had each other's names, "you don't need to type, you could write. This is clever, Lyn; it's funny. And editors are just crazy for funny things. You can sell it to the *News*."

"For real money, that the laundryman will take?"

"Yes, for real money. Oh, Lyn, send it in right away —to Mr. Faye."

"But I'd have to copy it."

"You are *too* lazy; I don't blame Jo."

"Maybe Jo would copy it."

"I'll copy it—nights."

"No, I'll do it myself." But a new man was coming aboard, and we were being introduced. A very blond man with heavy reddish hair, old, thirty-five at least; a minor poet, someone said. He quickly got an idea for a poem, and had his fountain pen out, and was scribbling on the back of some letters. All the splashing, and sploshing, and sloshing was enough to inspire a poem; but the coming of Captain Tommy was his theme. Everyone seemed wild about his coming. I was deep in the log. Lyn was helping with the ropes. And then we were off.

And Lyn had said sailing on Lake Michigan was such jolly sport! I couldn't forgive her. Sick? I was the sickest thing that ever sailed, one of the crew holding my head most of the time. For a squall blew up, and the sails swept the water, first on one side and then on the other, making us shift positions continually to balance the boat. But even with all the seasickness, it was thrilling to be 'way out on the mad, choppy lake in a little tossing shell.

It was a trial race, and the *Vixen* won. Lyn was wild. But as we came ashore amid all the hurrahs, she strode on ahead in pretended offence. "I never have any luck," she tossed back at me. "Couldn't get sick on a bet. And here you have everyone holding your head first trip out."

The minor poet came along with me: "We'll get

some hot coffee," he said, "then you'll feel better."

He took us to a table and ordered thin bread and butter and coffee. He was attentive now that his poem was off his mind. Lyn ate a sandwich, hardly conscious of what she was doing, jumping up every minute to call out the news to some one or to hear other news. She didn't pay the least attention to the minor poet, who was her brother's guest. He didn't eat, merely sipped coffee.

"I have a dinner on," he explained, "honouring Opie Read at the Press Club. I don't dare eat much now."

I stopped short, a sandwich halfway to my mouth. I had been feeling perfectly wretched, wanting only to get home and to bed. But a dinner at the Press Club! To Opie Read! I was actually talking with a man who belonged to the Press Club, where there were writers, real writers bunched, loads of them, right there in the flesh!

"Would you like to go to the Press Club?" he asked, seeming amused at the way I stared.

Would I! "I've written a book," I gasped. "It's being reviewed now; but I've never seen a *real author*. Oh, I'd love it above everything on earth!"

He was immediately interested, wanted to know all about my book, who were its publishers, and everything. Evidently he liked writers, too. Then he rose quickly. "Hurry home and dress," he said. "You can make it in time; I'll call for you."

"Lyn too?"

"Lyn what?" demanded that young person, hearing her name.

"The Press Club dinner to Opie Read. Wouldn't you just love to go?"

"Go to the Press Club when *Captain Tommy Lipton* is coming here? You're crazy, woman! But go on, don't let me keep you. And I'll copy the log—honest I will. Give me a ring at Jo's bank; we're moving again. He'll tell you where to find me."

I flew home. The old lady in the front parlour came pattering in after me. "What's up now? Got a better job?"

For the first time I remembered my deserted post. But this was a mere speck on the horizon of golden glory: "I'm going to the Press Club," I managed to get out. "To a dinner to Opie Read! A man is to call for me, a minor poet."

"A man! And where did you meet this man?"

"With Lyn, at the yacht club."

"And where did you meet Lyn?"

"In an office looking for a job."

"See here, my dear, I don't like this. I wouldn't like it for my daughter, and your mother wouldn't like it for you. Going out with a strange man!"

"But I work for strange men; I eat in restaurants with strange men all about me and serving me; I apply for jobs to strange men. Why can't I go to the Press Club with a strange man? Anyway, Lyn's brother knows him."

"It's different."

But I was tearing into the closet, pulling down dresses, trying to decide what to wear. "Promise me," persisted the old lady, "that you won't take anything to drink."

"Of course not!" A "drink" in our house was paramount to a ticket straight to the bad place. I was amazed at the suggestion.

"Well, plenty of girls do," she chattered on, helping me dress, "and plenty of men offer it, especially to girls they don't know very well. Always remember you haven't got anybody back of you. When a girl's alone in a big city——Why in the world didn't you come home in time to press this dress?"

It was an orange-coloured silk, and I hadn't worn it much, so it had hung in the closet, getting lines. She patted down my hair, tucked in a stray lock, and told me I looked very sweet. The minor poet called, gorgeous in evening clothes—silk hat, cane, and everything—all so shining that he quite awed me. I hadn't thought he would be so gorgeous.

I knew the old lady was watching, with curtain lifted, to see us go out.

CHAPTER XX

The entrance to the Press Club was crowded with gay, chattering men and women, all greeting one another in a happy way. I loved the atmosphere immediately. We went up in an elevator, then passed through a small gateway into the club rooms, where still other men received us with hand shakings and welcoming words—many of them such big, fine-looking men, and all so genial and pleasant. I followed the women on to the dressing room, and was glad to see there a hard wicker couch, and that the women, already a little late, were hurrying with their powdering and painting; for that wretched spine of mine was reaching the point of unendurance.

Soon, fortunately, I was alone, and could lie down and close my eyes for a few blessed minutes. A wonderful thing about that spine was that five minutes or so of rest was always enough. It seemed as if something were pressing on certain nerves, and a few minutes of relaxation eased this pressure so that I could get up and go on again in comparative comfort. Sometimes I felt very tender toward it, and I'd say: "Poor little spine, you do your best, anyway; you're gamey." And other times I felt savage toward it, and I'd say: "Now, I'm going! I can't listen to you forever! Keep up if you can, but I'm going!" (A friend who read this far, looked up frowningly, and said, "Why don't you leave

out all that about your spine? It would make you so much more interesting; nobody likes a half-sick person —in a book." But somehow, that spine was a very real element, and I shouldn't feel honest to leave it out, not even for the sake of artistry.)

The poet was anxiously pacing when I came out, the very last one. He probably wondered where the elaborate make-up was that had taken so long. But he didn't seem to mind, and hurried me on to the banquet table. I caught a glimpse of the assembly room as we went by—the shabby old leather-upholstered furniture and sombre oil paintings on still more sombre walls.

Perhaps a couple of hundred people were seated or in process of being seated about the banquet table that was in the shape of an open square. Press Club men with their wives and daughters and friends; and writers who were on a complimentary list maintained by the Press Club for "women of distinction," the poet explained, in lieu of allowing them membership.

"It's a far better way," one of the women to whom he had introduced me said. "You have the advantage of the Club's special occasions, such as banquets and lectures, as well as the Friday evenings when there is always something interesting going on, without responsibility or dues to pay."

Oh, how I did wish I was a "woman of distinction"!

The poet was very gay now, right in his element. He was a wonderful host, introducing me to everybody all about us, and telling them I had written a book. I wished he wouldn't. I felt so amateurish in this company of seasoned men with snowy hair or bald heads;

and women who, when told about my book, looked at me patronizingly, as if it was wonderful that I could do it at all, and said, "Why, how nice," and then began to talk about something else.

John McGovern was the most impressive man there: so tall and thin, with iron-gray hair and whiskers; and eyes that glowed as from some deep inner light. "An old-time newspaper man," the minor poet explained, seeing my gaze drawn to him. "And also a poet and playwright. He isn't so well these days, but he keeps at his work; hopes to finish a great play before his curtain rings down."

But here was John McGovern with us; he had left his place and was speaking to people. I was introduced, and he stood holding my hand and looking down at me with those burning eyes. "Philosophy," he said; "that's the important thing, after all. I'd like to think that, after everything else I have written is forgotten, my philosophy will still be remembered." He said it with a sort of sadness in his voice. Some way, I felt that he wasn't satisfied with the way his friends were stamping him. He wanted to be known for one thing, and he was being known for something else. Right away I felt kinship for this thin elderly gentleman with his patient voice and his burning eyes and his half-sick body. My gaze followed him back to his place at the speaker's table.

"That's his wife, the very pretty blonde woman," went on the minor poet, "and that's his daughter Mary, that tall, fine-looking girl. He's all wrapped up in Mary; she's his second self. She wants to go to New York to do some special studying, but she can't some

way bring herself to leave her father. And that's Opie, the big fellow."

He was like a tree, so tall, so solid, so strong looking, with heavy black hair in a rough tumble all over his head, just as he'd slept in it, apparently, and great black eyes that shone brilliantly as he glanced about the assemblage. "And that's his wife, and on the other side is his daughter—the tall girl who looks like him."

"Do they write, too, these daughters?"

"No, not as a rule; just busy having a good time, like other girls." He went on pointing out celebrities:

"There's Stanley Waterloo, the novelist; and Charles Eugene Banks, the poet; and there's Colonel Visscher, the homely man with the big nose. By the way, he made—and lost—quite a fortune out in that Northwest of yours. He will be interested in meeting you. He always says that's God's country, but I notice he sticks pretty close to the Press Club. He's been a newspaper man all his life; loafs and writes verse now that he's getting old. And that's George Ade, the tall, solemn-looking man. He's grown rich from his fables, they say; but I think what he really wanted to do was to write fiction. A case where success has been defeat. That's John T. McCutcheon, the cartoonist; and the other big man across from him is Clarence Darrow, the lawyer. And the tall, thin, poetic-looking one is Paul Hull. He sings divinely. We call him the club songbird. That very blond man is John Robert Gregg, who invented Gregg shorthand, and has grown rich from it. A few years ago he was struggling along, his wife helping support him, while he worked out his new system. That's she, the dark woman, a real comrade to

him. And that's Edgar Lee Masters, the poet. And next to him is Emerson Hough, the sandy one. And S. E. Kiser, the newspaper columnist—that dark, good-looking man, with the brown moustache. And next to him is Louie Blum."

"And who is Louie Blum?" The man indicated was a somewhat heavy, almost middle-aged Jew, with a quizzical look on his face—half amused, half tender. His eyes were deep set, his cheeks sagged. He looked homely—and good.

"Louie? Oh, he's just Louie—a fine fellow if ever there was one; writes a humorous column on the *Post;* court stories; he's a lawyer."

"I like especially John McGovern and Louie Blum."

"And they especially like each other."

But the chairman was rapping for order, and then Paul Hull started them singing:

> "And it's birds of a feather
> When good fellows get together—
> With a stein on the table, and a heart
> Without a care. . . ."

After that came the food . . . and then the speeches. They seemed wonderful to me. Such kindliness, such praise of one another's work, such good feeling. Much interest was expressed in Clarence Darrow's *Farmington,* a delightful study of his boyhood, and his father, and his father's old mill, and the father's ambition for his son, wanting him to be a great lawyer, because *he* had wanted to be a great lawyer, but had had to stick to the mill because of a family to support. All the wonderful people in the world seemed

wanting to do things they couldn't because of families to support, or something. I fell to wondering what sort of things might have happened in the world, if these people had in some way been free to do what *they* wanted to do, instead of having to run mills and grind grain that others might be fed. I wondered if these others that their sacrifice fed were as worth feeding, if ever they would come to as much, or be as useful, or live as full lives, as that one who had given up everything to feed them. I wondered why people who had great fortunes didn't go about the earth freeing these tired people, freeing them to follow their dreams. It seemed to me a more valuable thing to do than many of the things they did do with all their money. People freed to follow their dreams would make a nation very strong.

But I was recalled to the speeches. Opie Read was talking now. His talk shaped itself into a tribute to his mother—to all mothers—but it centred about his own mother, unseen, but leading the way for him as with a shining torch.

There was quiet after he sat down. Everyone said Opie had been at his best. And his best, they said, was better than his books. Opie—the real Opie—that the men of the Press Club loved, had never quite got himself into his books, they said.

I supposed the dinner was now over, for people began to stir, but John McGovern was rapping for order. He looked like a torch himself, standing there, a shining torch of pure light. People quieted, turned, and waited where they stood. He said there was one more tribute he would like to pay, this time to a young

woman, who, he said, had come to Chicago to blaze a way for herself among the tall timbers of literature. A brave girl, he said, who had not been afraid to take her gift in her hands and go forth with it, offering it to the world. A girl, he said, who might even be more gifted for the stage—essentially dramatic. He had had his attention called to a book she had written, and it showed fair promise. He was delighted to see that she was here to-night, and he proposed that then and there she be listed among the "women of distinction" whom the men of the Press Club were proud to own as "one of us."

Oh, how I envied that girl! I craned my neck, looking for her. There were a number of young girls—which one could it be? And then he called my name and asked everyone to stop and greet me!

I jumped so violently that the minor poet caught my arm and held me, laughing heartily at my surprise. And now everyone all about was turning and welcoming me, for all the world like they do in the Methodist Church when a new one joins, only with such jolly greetings. And now the dinner was truly over, and there was a buzz of talk, and dance music was starting in the assembly room. More men and women crowded about, taking my hand, saying pleasant things. And all the time, as in a dream, I was thinking, Can it possibly be that he means me—that I am now on the Press Club's list of "women of distinction"—that all these brilliant writers are going to let me come freely among them, listen to them, learn from them, have them for my friends?

And all at once I was crying, crying so hard I could

not be introduced any more. And then I heard a funny, quizzical voice that some way checked the tears, and I looked up, and it was Louie Blum, smiling in a teasing, kindly way, his eyes twinkling and offering his hand:

"Hello, Yellow Kid," he said in a throaty voice with a German accent. "Come on and dance."

But I couldn't dance—that spine. I asked the minor poet please to take me home.

CHAPTER XXI

Eight dollars a week to live on and be a "woman of distinction." I was sitting on the side of my bed the next morning, thinking about it. I had to do better. I wasn't brave, or taking my "gift" in my hand, if I just went on, living on eight dollars a week, four for my "job," four for the Saturday children's story which I still managed to get out. Besides, I simply *must* attend the Press Club affairs. There'd be lectures, and talks by authors, and opportunities to know all those wonderful older men and women who had lived, and learned to write, and had found out about life and everything. They had been so kind, all those big men. The first big man to help me had died; the second, I had mortally offended. But here were more—a forest of them. The symbol of great trees stayed in my mind.

The old lady rapped and came on in. "Dreaming over your conquests, my dear?" she said brightly.

I half roused, scarcely hearing.

"Did you dance a lot?"

"Dance? Oh, no, I didn't dance."

"Play cards?"

"No—oh, no—I didn't play cards."

"Weren't there any nice young men there?"

"I didn't notice. But oh, the wonderful *old* men, men who have lived and done things, and know what it's all about, and what counts and what doesn't. And I am to

see them all again! And they are to be my friends! And perhaps tell me things, show me the way."

"Bosh! The way for *you,* my dear, is to meet a nice young man of suitable age with a good steady job and marry him!"

But I was not hearing. "John McGovern is the sweetest of them all. He looks right through the outside you and sees the real you. He is very frail, and tired, and a little discouraged, and he writes poetry and plays and philosophy; and he's disappointed with what he has done, and heartsick because he doesn't see his way clear to doing better. It's ill health with him. His body stands in his way. But he's the sweetest of them all—unless it's Louie Blum, a middle-aged Jew with an understanding heart, and humour."

"But what about your escort?"

"Oh, I think he is the very kindest man in all the world, for he took me to the Press Club."

"Humph!" sniffed the old lady. "You're not normal." And with that she trotted out again. But I sat on in a dream—the big men . . . the big men . . . I was meeting the big men. . . .

I received a card from the yacht club with an invitation to sail on the *Vixen* "any old time"; and I got in touch with Lyn again through her brother. She came to see me immediately, and we soon knew all about each other. She belonged to quite a literary family, I found, being a relative of Hall Caine. Her people had come from the Isle of Man.

Again I suggested that she copy the log for the *News.*

"But why? Couldn't I write some more instead?"

she asked; and with that sat down at my typewriter and thumped away for an hour, then tossed the pages over to me.

"How's that?"

I read what she had written, and was laughing over every line. "Lyn, it's great stuff!" I said, in almost hushed tones, feeling myself at the birth of a writer. "You need never type letters again. Editors fairly *cry* for humour. And this is simply splendid."

It was that knack she had of twisting phrases and meanings, that unexpected contrary thinking that brought surprise and a quick laugh. She was a born satirist; everyone she touched became more or less absurd. She took nothing seriously. And she had written it all so easily.

"What will they pay me for it?"

"Well, if it fills an entire column, about five dollars."

"Three columns a week, then, would bring me in as much as I can make now typing letters. That would satisfy Jo. All right; I'll do three columns a week, if your old boy will take it."

"But, Lyn, why not do six? That would be thirty dollars. Think of it!"

"But when would I sail?"

I looked my disgust, I suppose.

"Well, why in the world don't you do it yourself, as you're so keen about being a writer?"

I explained the difficulty I had had with the *News* editor.

"But you know how—he taught you."

"Yes, but he's mad at me now."

"But you say he's just got to have that column."

"Yes, to make his tired business men smile."

"Well, for goodness sakes, goosie, why don't you write the stuff and send it in under another name. Get another coloured ribbon on your machine, or another machine with smaller type, or something. If he doesn't care who does it, and he's just suffering to have it done, you'd be doing him a real kindness, and acquiring merit, and everything."

She had opened up a wonderful vista. . . . "But would that be honest?"

"Honest? It's the only honest thing to do. Didn't he train you right out of his own valuable time? And what's he getting out of it? If I'd gone to all that trouble to teach someone to sail a boat, and they didn't appreciate it enough to give me some benefit out of it, by some hook or crook, were not clever enough to find a way, and honest enough to use it after they found it, no matter how——"

"Lyn, Lyn, I'll do it," I cried. Then I had another idea. "But, Lyn, humour is your gift, it isn't mine. You can fill this column every day and have a good income and make a big hit, just like George Ade, if you'll only work hard; and I'll find something else more in my line. I'll write love stories for syndicates, with weeps in them, but happy endings. I can do weeps as easily as you can do laughs. And I'll invent a lot of happy endings and tack them on. No, you go ahead—the *News* column is just naturally yours."

"Listen," she said. "I promise to do three columns, if your editor wants me to; but not one line more. I'm going to sail the rest of the time. The season is over quick enough, goodness knows. And after that I'm

going to skate. And if the editor will pay me $7.50 instead of $5, then I'll do just two."

"Don't you love to write, Lyn?" I asked, grieved.

"I hate it, except the log for the boys. But I'd rather do a story than type My-dear-sir-yours-received-and-in-regard-to all week; and it will satisfy Jo, it will tickle the boys at the yacht club, and it will make sailing necessary to keep my log fresh, so I'll do it. And now, if you'll lend me fifty cents to pay a bill I can't tell Jo about, I'll repay you when I get the check from this story."

I gave her the fifty cents, and she dashed out into the night—such a gallant little figure.

Lightness filled life like sunshine since I had the Press Club. It would come to me, as I sat over my work, that forever and ever on Friday nights there would be the Press Club. It was a shining, secret joy. When I next tried to do a funny story for the *News*, it came so easily that I wondered how I could ever have found it hard. I confided my difficulties to the old lady, and she readily consented to my use of her name. Then and there this gentle wife and mother person, who had never had a serious thought beyond keeping a husband cheered up and marrying off her daughters satisfactorily, entered the lists of the world's humorists—at least, so I pretended that I thought about it. It gave zest to her days, for above all things she loved being told things, taken into my confidence.

Lyn landed immediately; this was the sailing season, and Captain Tommy's visit was making everything about sailing doubly welcome. Her work made such a hit, and there was such a demand for more, that she

finally copied the log and sent it all in. So she was in funds—paid back my fifty cents, blew her friends to a dinner at the yacht club—and was broke in a week. My story also was accepted. I now began to think about giving up the bureau and trusting once more to free lancing. But I hated to leave poor Hester, so postponed going from day to day. We had grown to be a habit with each other, and a comfort, being equally determined to succeed. I loved Lyn, and enjoyed her, but Hester crept into my sympathies. You couldn't possibly sympathize with Lyn, no matter what her latest difficulty. You couldn't hold her still long enough.

When I met Jo, I wasn't surprised at the heavy frown on his forehead, or his look of bewilderment when his eyes fell on his sister. He wasn't in the least sure just what should be done with little sisters, and he wanted her to return to the straitlaced aunt who had brought her up, and let him give her an allowance. It was that, or a job: Lyn was between the two. He was proud of her *News* work, though. "If she'll only stick," he said gloomily.

The men at the yacht club watched for her stories, where they found all their doings written up. This was the audience Lyn had in mind when she wrote, just as the tired business men were mine; for my stories were going in now quite often—written at night after a day at the Bureau—and most of them being accepted. And then I squeezed out the time, working evenings and holidays, to try one of the little romance stories such as the syndicates used: it was accepted and I was sent a check for $10. This gave me courage.

"Hester," I said the next day, "I'm going to quit."

"Spine?"

"No, but I begin to feel safe about free lancing." I told her about the syndicate story.

"Stay one more week," she begged.

"Why?" I was sorry to quit, sorry to leave Hester, for probably we should not meet again; our lives were routed in such different channels.

"Because I'm quitting then, for I've the promise of a small part, and my teeth are all paid for. I'd like to keep the Bureau going strong as long as I'm here; it will be a good record if I ever have to come back." For Hester had been advanced to forewoman.

"You will never come back," I told her.

"No, I don't expect to." For a long time she looked off into the distance with serious, fixed gaze. Then, "I wonder what *is* out there in the world for me," she said, almost like a human girl, faltering, wistful. It was the only note of unfaith I ever caught in her.

"You don't love it, do you, Hester?"

"I love the money it will bring."

Looking at Hester, I couldn't help wondering if a man, even a good-intentioned man like a minister, had a right to give life to so many children with tastes that he had no power to gratify. Children for whom he could do so little as to cause such a hard sort of determination to grow up in one as had grown up in Hester. She had been so soft that she had turned solidly hard—so soft about all the little sisters.

If I was naming a special day to honour all over the land, it would be Big Sister Day, recognizing the part big sisters play in most large families.

I stayed another week with Hester, then resigned.

CHAPTER XXII

I had chosen a pretty severe season to begin again as a free lance. It was bitter cold now, and Lyn was skating, her cheeks like apples and her purple eyes like stars. She had never in her life had a day's illness, and didn't know the feel of pain. She was writing skating stories now as easily as she had the other, but never more than three a week. It occurred to me one day that this was pure gameness on her part. If she did *more* than three, of course, I couldn't sell three—and I didn't always sell that many.

"You know, Lyn," I said, "I can do the little love stories much more easily than I can humour, and sell them for a better price. Won't you take over the entire *News* column?"

"I will not."

"Why won't you?"

"Because three's my limit; and I'm not going to do them much longer. I'm going to travel. If you want to sit with your nose over a typewriter all your life, go ahead. I don't, that's all. I'm saving every penny I can; and when I have $200 between the leaves of my Bible, I'll start."

"Where to?"

"To see the world."

"Lyn, you're hopeless."

"But not helpless," and she took an apple from my

fruit basket, pared it, and whirling the paring around her head three times, dropped it, to see what letter her future husband's name was to begin with. It was a question mark.

"See there?" she said cheerfully. "I'm not to have a husband. It's just as Jo says. So I might as well start out and have a good time."

"Did you ever have anything else?"

"Yes; I'm bored stiff doing these stories; crazy to quit."

"Oh, Lyn, and you could be a really great humorist; just look what George Ade has done!"

"But look at George Ade. Who wants to be as solemn as all that just to be a great success?"

Lyn was beyond me. I wondered if it was because there were no taxes, or assessments, or interest bills facing her that she could just take her youth and riot in it. And then I thought of poor weighted-down Hester, only two years her senior, and I was thankful for a Lyn to keep things balanced.

Then a wonderful thing happened. A shifting of plans brought Mr. Dennis of the *Record-Herald* to the *News*—the pleasant Mr. Dennis whose nerves had stood the strain. I didn't dare risk telling him of my difficulty with Mr. Faye, for he was intensely loyal to his paper, too, and he might not want to trust it with me after the mistake I had made. But, as Lyn had so picturesquely brought to my attention, I now knew how, and he just must have those little stories. They were a part of the paper's tradition, like a restaurant that has a name for serving excellent salads, and must serve them, no matter who is the chef. So now I sent

him a humorous story under my own name, with a letter explaining that I had done this work for Mr. Faye in the past and would love to do it for him. He accepted the story, wrote me he would be glad to have me do them, and asked no questions. Once more I could openly claim my work on the *News*.

In the joy of restoration, I again visited the Press Club, taking Lyn with me, though it didn't interest her. And again I met the wonderful men who had been on the planet so many more years than most of us; and still others that I had not met the other time. There was "Uncle Ike" Fleming, the oldest newspaper man in Chicago, now retired, tall and straight and snowy-haired, and awfully jolly. He came trundling a wheelbarrow up to me—the janitor had left it out of its closet—and told me to hop in and he'd give me a ride. Then he wheeled me all about the dark old rooms, to all the little secluded nooks and corners, interrupting men at cards, or chess, or over their steins to introduce me and tell them to save their funny stories for me. For I had confided in him right away about doing the *News* stories, and had told him that humour wasn't easy for me.

Everyone received me with the utmost cordiality, glancing up, smiling, saying, "Yes, yes, by all means; just remind me," or something like that. The air was filled with tobacco smoke, and the odour of beer and old leather; and there was a crunching of pretzels, and the rumble of billiard balls, and now and then bursts of laughter, and a background of dark-panelled walls covered with old tapestries and paintings; and over all the atmosphere of age and shabbiness and dear delight.

Men who, as night editors in their earlier years, had the owl habit, dropped in all through the evening, each to find his special niche and crony and occupation. Some were forever going to group after group with an absurd story or a bit of news; and all of them, no matter how many years they had been on the earth, seemed perpetually young.

After this I went regularly on Friday nights, Friday being "ladies' night." Always there was some special programme or a banquet—and then dancing. There would be talks on Shakespeare by John McGovern; on Chinese philosophy by Paul Carus; on cartoons by John T. McCutcheon; on writing in general by George Ade, and Emerson Hough, and Stanley Waterloo; and these men were all intensely interesting to me—because they had achieved.

I tried never to miss one of these talks; but better still were the quiet little visits I had with old retired writers or editors or publishers off in some secluded corner. These men were almost all willing to talk, or ready with a story or a suggestion for one. In time it got to be so that the moment I pushed through the gateway, I'd see a hand beckoning, and a voice would call out, "I've got a good one for you—come over here," and I would hurry over and slip down on an old sagged leather-cushioned davenport, and hear the "good one" from some editor who had once been the terror, no doubt, of just such cubs as myself, but was now so willing to help. "By George, it's wonderful to have enthusiasm," I'd often hear them say, as I left them. They seemed to think it amazing—my enthusiasm. One of the older men, who was a theatrical book-

ing agent, invited me to go with him to a "first night" performance. I was absorbed in the play, of course; but I couldn't fail to see that he watched me more than he did the stage. He seemed vastly amused, and he invited me again and again, always on "first nights." Finally he owned up: "I gauge the performance by your response," he said. "I can't always get it—guess I'm too jaded—but, by Jiminy, when your eyes begin to shine, I know the play's going over!"

When I once got inside the Press Club, I wanted never to leave. I wished with all my heart that *I* was a retired editor and could just loiter there all I pleased. Once I said to "Commodore" Perry, past eighty, and one of my staunchest friends—he was a grandson of the real Commodore Perry, so everyone just gave him the title—something about what an ideal home the club was for them, how much they got out of it. "Do you know who gets the most out of the club?" he came back. "You and other youngsters like you. You come in for the garnered wisdom, such as it is. We who are through living pass it on to you who are still young and believe in it." Then he suddenly patted my shoulder and said quickly: "But keep on believing in it; don't ever lose your faith," and immediately turned gruff.

Louie Blum was a good friend from the start.

"Hello, Yellow Kid," he would call out; or with that quizzical grin, "Well, cheerful Shannon, don't you know they put people in jail for that?"

"For what?"

"For being cheerful without good cause." Or it would be, "Well, well, Shanty!" or "Crazy Cat"—always an absurd name. For some reason I struck

him as a huge joke. I couldn't see why. I couldn't see anything funny about me, and one evening I told him so.

"Anyway, it's a joke I'm very fond of," he said in his deep guttural voice, so full of kindness. "Come on"—taking my arm—"here are some girls I want you to know."

He took me across the room and introduced me to Zelda—fair and lovely, with the most beautiful arms, surely, in all the world, but not caring a bit how she looked, all music, wanting to be a concert singer—and, oh, the tired times afterward that her voice lulled me to rest! She was nineteen—a Press Club daughter. And there was Clare: the moment I looked at Clare I thought of Browning's description of his wife:

> . . . as you sit
> Musing by firelight, that great brow
> And the spirit-small hand propping it. . . .

For she was the frailest-looking girl, with the widest brow—and as it developed later, the most sense. She was slightly lame—the result of having been dropped from her nurse's arms when she was a baby. Her father was dead, and her mother was a teacher in the city schools, Irish, and with such a fund of humour that she was almost regarded as one of the Press Club's "women of distinction"; for they always sent her an invitation. She told stories so cleverly, everyone said she could have been a success as a monologist, on the stage; but she was a success, anyway—a small, gray-haired, merry soul who was persisting in the deception

that she dearly loved teaching, after a quarter of a century of it.

The deception was necessary, because Clare of the wide brow and spirit-small hands was determined that her mother should retire and let her earn the living. She wanted to go into business; she knew she could make her fortune if her mother would only consent, and her mother just knew that business would kill poor little sensitive Clare; and so there they were, contending, each for the love of the other. Clare was to become as a flower near my heart for all the after times.

The other girl Louie wanted me to meet was Demmy; certainly the prettiest girl in the whole club; such satin-smooth skin, so peachy white, and such large, dark, luminous eyes, and such shining bands of black hair. Louie explained that Demmy, in addition to doing occasional fiction, had recently taken on a question and answer column for the *Post,* and after introducing us he said very staidly:

"You two girls should be friends—you might help each other." And turning to me he explained: "Only to-day Demmy had a letter from a dear reader wanting to know how to raise squabs. 'Squabs? Squabs?' says Demmy. 'What do I know about squabs? Oh, well, I'll look it up in a seed catalogue.' "

Demmy darted daggers at him out of her lovely eyes, and I could see that she didn't relish being one of Louie's "jokes" either. She, too, wanted to be taken seriously. But we all loved Louie.

Happy days . . . happy days. . . .

From the background, like murmurings a long way off, I caught suggestions that the Press Club was not

the perfect thing I found it. Too much poker, wives said. Too much dressing, complained mothers of many daughters and wives of struggling writers. "It *used* to be," a mother of two grown daughters declared loudly, "that *literature* was the thing, that a poet was honoured for his *wares;* that you came to the Press Club for *mental* stimulus. And *now* what is it? A dress parade, that's what it is!"

"And the *divorces!*" chimed in another. "You hardly dare ask a man after his wife from one Friday night to the next for fear he's been divorced in the interim."

"Oh, well," defended another, powdering her nose, "a man used to *plant* three or four wives; look at the old cemeteries, if you don't believe it. *I'd* rather be divorced, thank you."

"And the *dancing,*" from yet another. "Everybody dancing! There's Paul Carus, one of the greatest scholars in the world—there's a whole row of his books in there on Chinese philosophy, and he's in America now for the first time in thirty years, and where is he at this minute? In there *dancing* with those girls! Is that what a Press Club is for, I ask you?"

No one seemed exactly to know, and so Paul went on dancing and treading on the girls' toes; a little grizzly man with whiskers all over his face, just crazy to dance. "He can't learn," said Mary McGovern, as she rearranged the pink rosebuds in her pretty fair hair, "but we can go on trying to teach him, just the same."

On the whole, though, I think the married women were grateful to the girls. They took up the slack in their husbands. So many of these men were philoso-

phers of one kind or another, and a writer of any kind, but especially a philosopher, is bound to be too much for one family. They may love him, but they can't steadily enjoy him, for in the very nature of his calling, he must repeat a good deal, thinking things out, clarifying his ideas, choosing the right words. So I never thought the wives really objected to their husbands' dancing with the girls. It was talk more than anything else: but when they got fussy, I scooted, and found some dear old man hid off in a corner over his pipe, to tell me a story, or talk philosophy, or nonsense, or heartaches, or gossip a little about one man's penchant for red ties, and another's for lavender socks. Undoubtedly there were things to complain of: Opie just wouldn't comb his hair, and some of them drank too much, and when one of these tumbled clear over the banister right into the midst of a card table and broke up a game of bridge, it *was* high time something was done about it. But, oh, there was so much else that didn't need a thing done about it!

Dress didn't worry me, though I did wish I had another blouse that wasn't red. With my first sufficiently large accumulation of checks I had gone shopping and bought a handsome black broadcloth skirt, cut circular, with a wide band of black satin stitched heavily all around it. Then I found a bright red broadcloth blouse with a high collar and long sleeves, and I acquired that. And right away I saw another on sale, of bright scarlet satin, a fluffy affair that seemed better for Press Club evenings, so I bought that, too. One Friday night I would wear one blouse, and the next Friday the other. The skirt was generally caked with

mud when I reached home for crossings were muddy, and I couldn't somehow keep it up—so it spent the following day, draped over the radiator, drying out. When dry, I would beat off the mud and have it ready for the next occasion. This was my only clothes problem, getting the mud off in time.

CHAPTER XXIII

The fussing about clothes, I soon found, was being given fresh urge. The Press Club was to hold a grand kirmess between Christmas and New Year's, a three-days' affair. They were preparing to spend a good deal of money, hoping to raise a good deal more, to pay off a mortgage, or buy a painting, or plan a new building, or something—I never quite knew what. But, anyway, in assigning everyone to duty, I was assigned to the authors' booth, with two others, both young, and wives of Press Club members. Immediately I began to prepare by reading as many of our authors' books as I could.

But when I met in committee with the other two, I was amazed. It was, "What will you wear the first afternoon?" and, "Well, I haven't decided fully about the first *afternoon,* but for the first *evening,* I'm having a brocaded satin made, baby blue with swansdown trimming."

"Oh, I'm so glad it's *blue,* for I have selected a shell-pink chiffon with rhinestone trimming, and shell-pink satin slippers, with the cutest little rhinestone buckles. I had to go all over town for the buckles, and finally found them at Marshall Field's. I paid enough, but they are too cunning for words; and——"

But the first speaker now turned to me: "And what are *you* going to wear? Our colours just mustn't clash, you know, for the authors' booth will be in the very

centre of the big banquet hall, the most conspicuous thing in it."

"Why, I hadn't thought about *clothes!*"

"Imagine!" They looked at each other in stupefaction. "And the kirmess only a week off! Where on earth can you get a gown made *now?*"

"Well, anyway, I won't clash," I said.

"But do tell us the colour. We simply *must not* run risks. It's *so* important." They were both frowning heavily and looked ready to pronounce sentence.

I thought hard. I didn't own an elaborate evening gown, and all the simple little silk dresses I had brought East with me were just about in ribbons. Then there flashed into my mind memory of a white organdy that I hadn't worn on account of the cleaning bills. It had a wide handsome white satin sash, but for the rest was a mere succession of pin-tucked ruffles. "I'll wear white," I said.

"Good!" They both smiled engagingly now; this was splendid, that I wasn't going to clash. And then they fell to discussing what they would wear each afternoon and the succeeding evenings. "And what will you wear?" they again asked brightly.

"White."

Once more they smiled happily. "That makes it so safe; now we won't clash," and they said the committee might as well adjourn as everything was attended to.

I went home and dragged out the mass of fine wrinkles that was my old white organdy. It looked like a bad dream. But I went to work on it, whacking off the long sleeves at the elbows, cutting the high neck down to a V, and finishing the raw edges with some of the

ruffling I was able to take out of the gathers; and then I carried it to the cleaner.

It came home looking perfectly beautiful, with every little finely tucked ruffle flaunting itself saucily. I could have hugged it—such a gallant little dress! It lay on my bed looking like something for a girl graduate. I called the old lady in to see if she thought it would do. She was right in her element.

"It's lovely," she said, all but breathless. "Now all you need is some flowers, tiny pink rosebuds."

"But they wilt on me so badly; and anyway, they're too expensive."

"Then I'll tell you what we'll do. Get a big bunch of smilax. It lasts hours, never wilts. I'll drape it, just like a delicate little vine, but sort of careless and easy, down the side, from the shoulder, and I'll make you some tiny pink rosebuds out of some scraps of satin I have left from making Christmas presents. They will peep through the green leaves, cunningly, and give just the needed touch of colour—and they'll look *real,* too —nobody will know the difference. Slip the dress on—let's see how it hangs. Why didn't you call me before you shortened the sleeves? They might just as well have been shorter—right up to the shoulder; but they look all right this way—more youthful. You're right handy with your needle for such a *hurried* girl. Let's see—stand off. That neck could have been just a little—weentsy teensty bit lower and not done a bit of harm, but it looks very pretty as it is, so we won't disturb it. Now, then, the sash——"

She had pins in her mouth, was kneeling, adjusting the long loops of white satin that had come out so

wonderfully. If anyone in the world ought to have a monument to him, it's a cleaner. "Now, about slippers—yes, you must have white satin slippers, and I'll tack a tiny cluster of pink satin rosebuds on each toe." She was perfectly happy; so was I. "One thing more" —she stood off looking me over.

"It mustn't cost anything."

"It won't. Let me dress your hair for you; it always looks as if you'd just come out of a swim—like old Towser—and shaken it dry."

"Some people like my hair. The minor poet said he was going to make a poem about the girl with gold in her hair."

"I like it, too; but let's have it a little more conventional this time. You've got a nice slender neck, and I want to try piling it high on your head."

I agreed. I was indifferent—the quickest way had been the best for me ever since I'd quit wearing it in braids. Then suddenly a new thought thrust its head like a serpent into my Eden. "But it's every night for three nights! I've told them I can't serve afternoons as I have my work to get out. But this dress will be a rag after the first night."

"No, it won't," she said briskly. "It will go straight back to the cleaner for a good pressing each morning, and I'll put on fresh smilax." I hugged her!

When the minor poet called for me that evening, he said, "Oh!" and his eyes brightened. Later I read complete approval in Louie's half-wistful smile. And Demmy exclaimed, "But, my dear, how *sweet* you look!" Demmy was majestically handsome in a heavy white satin gown made like a Greek robe.

But I began to feel uneasy when I saw the large banquet room, the conspicuous placement of the authors' booth, in the very centre, and the grandeur of my two allies. They were both in long-trained, scintillating gowns, with huge ostrich-feather fans, one white, the other black, and high head dresses with clusters of little tight curls dangling over their ears; and they were wearing rouge, and powder, and black patches on cheek and shoulder; and they had very low cuts, their shoulder straps slipping down and having to be hunched back continually. Altogether very much gorgeousness, very much sparkle, very elaborate manners.

They greeted me effusively, frankly looked me over, were *so* glad I had come. They had been there all the afternoon, had merely hurried home to dress and come right back—and didn't I look sweet!

I might look "sweet," but I wasn't gorgeous, and I *did* clash. I was too simple. I didn't fit into their picture in the very least.

"Let me stay on *this* side," I said, wanting to keep away from them. They were like a Watteau painting. Queer, but they didn't seem to notice how we clashed. I was in white, and white wasn't supposed to clash with blue and pink; but it did.

"That will be fine, if you will, dear," the blue lady said. "We are both so tired from being on our feet all afternoon in those terribly high heels. If we could just rest for a while here on the davenport. You're sure you don't mind?"

Mind! I was delighted. An old leather-upholstered davenport had been drawn up beside the booth for an

occasional resting place. And now they both sat down and spread their skirts and swayed their great fans, and talked to each other with a "My *dear,* will you believe it" manner for all the world like little girls playing lady.

I studied them intently from among the books on the other side of the booth: they made a beautiful picture—they could have stepped right out of a frame; only, it seemed to me, as they were representing authors, it would be appropriate for them to be discussing one of Opie Read's or Stanley Waterloo's books, instead of just saying "My *dear,*" in that inane way over their fans. I turned to select a book to hand them, and I saw John McGovern a dozen feet away, gazing at me with shining eyes.

"My dear child," he said in a hushed sort of voice, "stand just as you are—don't move, *please.* I want to call Mary."

He was back immediately with Mary: "Mary," he said, still in that hushed voice, "see—see Miss Monroe. That's just as your mother looked, my dear, the night I married her."

Mary looked at me, smiled in her nice generous way, then reached up and kissed her father right in the midst of all the whiskers. Then she caught my hand and said impulsively: "You look *just dear,*" and ran on back to her flower booth.

My two allies had no laurels that I envied after that. The great, the wonderful John McGovern had been pleased.

The kirmess was an outstanding success. Many people took occasion to visit the Press Club, as it was

rarely open to other than members and their friends. That was the basis of other murmurings of disapproval I caught at times, among the men. The Press Club needed money, and a movement was on foot for a new building. There were those who were for extending the membership to others than press men for the sake of funds; and others who bitterly opposed it.

"It's a Press Club; *keep* it a Press Club," said the latter.

"Yes—uh-huh—by all means; of course; mustn't be anything else. But if we let in So-and-so, he'll make a large contribution toward the new building, and——"

"Hell! Who wants a new building?"

"Well, it would be a fine monument to Chicago press men."

"Monument? Monument? What do you mean monument? Who's dead?"

And so it would go until someone would order hot coffee all around, or ginger ale, or beer, and the argument would end in liquid refreshment.

We sold a good many books, all autographed by their authors, and authors' autographed photographs, and poems personally written on parchment. Chicago showed much interest in her writers, and came in throngs night after night, to eat with them, and buy of them, and dance with them, and wander over the old worn rooms, and say, "*That's* the chair Opie Read lounges in oftenest," or "*That's* where the men play bridge," and one would laugh and add, "poker, rather"; and another would nod up a little stairway that led to a balcony and say: "Up there, most likely." And then the other men of the party would smile, and

look knowingly at one another, and one of the women would exclaim, "What *is* it you find so funny, anyway!" but half-way know and be amused. Oh, very naughty little boys press-club men were supposed to be with their poker and beer. And then one of the women would half gasp, to whispered information, "Is *that* George Ade? Well! I never *dreamed* he looked like *that.*"

And another would say, "Well, what's the matter with him? *I* think he's *terribly* good looking."

"But the fables! I didn't suppose he looked like *that!*" And stare as if he were a white elephant or the fat lady in the circus, just there to be gazed at.

We remained late each evening, for, of course, the workers in the booths had to stay till everybody was gone, to sell things. And then we would gather about a table and have something to eat and drink, together with a few old-timers who never had much idea of going home, anyway. And the older men, now in their element, would become aroused and talky and say wise things, and witty things, and foolish things; things right out of their real minds and hearts, not just polite things, and chattery things, and gossipy things, and personal things; and we would all have a very happy time.

On the closing night we had a special celebration. It was growing pretty late—or early—along toward two, with a table of only nine or ten left. The treasurer was counting the receipts at a smaller table near by, looking well pleased, for a good many thousand dollars had been taken in. I don't remember how many, but I do remember that even the skeptics who had said they would rather just donate the money outright than have

it dragged off their persons at a bazaar, were satisfied.

It had been a rare hour since the crowd had gone—everyone at the table having had something to say, something worth saying; and now Louie was at it, good old ponderous Louie. He had a fine story aboard, was weighted with it, but the lateness of the hour, or his weariness after three nights of it, or maybe his mood, made the story come laboriously. He couldn't get it out with even his usual speed, which was never excessive. It had now lasted some time to the accompaniment of blinking eyes, and suppressed yawns, and strained attention—all about a Christmas tree that was so very tall, with the choicest gift at the very top.

All the presents, it seemed, had been distributed but this one, and "Santy" couldn't some way reach it. Where in the world was he to find something long enough? He tried a cane—but that wasn't long enough. He tried an umbrella—but that wasn't long enough. He tried a broom—but that wasn't long enough.

"If he'd had that story of yours, Louie, he'd had something long enough," the minor poet broke in from the opposite end of the table; and with that everyone burst into laughter, and instantly there was a scraping of chairs, and people getting to their feet, leaving Louie sitting there all alone looking across at the villain, and muttering in his thick, guttural voice, "Idiot! Idiot!"

But pretty soon he was up, too, and grinning in his funny way, that wry sort of a smile. And he wouldn't tell us, then or after, how Santy at last got the present down. I don't know to this day; and I can't ask Louie now.

CHAPTER XXIV

The kirmess left me with an obsession: I must have a proper evening dress, all satiny, and tinselly, and fluffy, and falling off the shoulders every minute, and everything. I owed it to the Press Club, I told myself. I couldn't keep on forever going to banquets in a scarlet satin blouse, and lectures in a scarlet broadcloth one. It didn't show proper respect. The women were right. Clothes were coming to mean more and more to the Press Club. Or maybe I was coming out of my first delirium of joy over being there at all sufficiently to notice.

To the end of earning for the new gown, I wrote more concentratedly than ever on the little fiction stories for syndicates, as well as the *News* funny column. Everything that happened to me, pleasant or unpleasant, became the basis of a story. I made a new motto and pinned it up over my desk:

Cash your troubles

Lyn also adopted it; and when we were hurt, or hurt each other, which we sometimes did in our frankness of speech, or lost one of our admirers to some other girl, or failed to be invited where we hoped to be, or had nothing to wear, we would put it into a story and forget it. It proved an excellent method of recovering from hurts, for when a thing was once written out

it just sort of evaporated. This put reality into my work, no doubt, and all unconsciously pulled me more and more out of the clouds into the everydayness of existence. The opposite, also, I proved to be true: if I wanted a thing to have power, I mustn't tell it. Keep myself charged with it till I was ready to use it.

Acceptances were the ruling thought. I would awake in the morning with my eyes turning automatically to the door, under which letters were thrust, watching for the first mail. It was the most thrilling moment of the day. I would hear the landlady's step, then the scraping of envelopes along the boards, then see the letters. I would spring out of bed and run get them, and oh, the thin, flat, blue envelope that meant a check from the syndicate, and the thin white one that meant a check from the *Daily News!* And, oh, the chill about my heart when it was a thick, long one that meant a rejected manuscript!

How many of these I received! Enough, surely, to paper any number of proverbial walls.

"Why do they come back?" I demanded fiercely, one evening at the Press Club. "The rejected ones seem to me every bit as good as the ones they buy!"

"The best explanation of a rejected manuscript I ever received," said Dr. Frank Crane, "was 'Not quite.' That tells it."

The actor, Frederick Warde, in a nice little talk with me, told me how hard John McGovern had always worked, what a word student he was. "He and Henry Guy Carleton, the playwright, worked ten days once to get a word. The word was 'plume,' for the line 'The peacock's song is written on his *plume*.' You can easily

see that is the only word that would do, and yet it took them ten days to arrive at it. Writing is like that, my dear—if it's worth doing."

Ten days to a word! It was appalling.

I stayed away from the Press Club, and worked day and night, often lying on my back and scribbling on a tablet. I wanted so to perfect my output that I would have no rejections. I believed it could be done.

At last I had sufficient five- and six- and eight- and ten-dollar checks to go shopping for the evening gown. I was going to make it myself, with a designer's help and that of the old lady in the front parlour. I had decided on every detail. It was to be corn colour, and made with a succession of accordion-pleated flounces, the shoulder one to be loose, so it could slip down all the time in the accepted mode. And there was to be a wide black velvet sash.

It was a joyous expedition, and I found the most delectable material—a pale, soft, satiny gold—and I bought it with gloating over its loveliness. This was to be a *real* gown, nothing skimped. Then the designer came, and we went to work, the old lady making suggestions every minute. We had a regular party over it, just loving it into existence; and it couldn't have turned out better.

"Corn is your colour, my dear," said the old lady, "because of the gold in your hair and your very dark eyes. Always remember that when you're not sure what to get." She was on her knees, working away, now pinning up the skirt. It was so very important to her—wearing the right colour; nothing in life more so. "Now," she said, getting up, "let me try piling that

heavy hair of yours high on your head, to give you stateliness—and I want to try some little curls over your ear. Did you get your gloves? Let me see them. . . . A little too deep a shade—but never mind, they will stretch out lighter. And now the black satin slippers."

Luckily, there was a grand affair at the Club right away. I had missed the reception and banquet they had tendered to "the ladies of the kirmess"—hadn't, in fact, been to anything since the kirmess. So I was happy to think that the wonderful new gown wouldn't have to hang long in the closet before being worn. Joyously, I could go—and properly dressed.

I was so excited when the evening came I could scarcely get into my pretty new outfit. And I rouged, under the old lady's direction, for the first time, and powdered my face, and stuck a black patch on my cheek, and another on my shoulder, and allowed the dear old lady to pile my hair just as high as she wanted to, with "rats" in it, and curls over one ear, the curls purchased at a department store.

Everything was perfect, even the shoulders of my gown falling down and having to be hunched back continually in the approved manner. I was as happy as any Cinderella awaiting her Prince Charming, for the minor poet was to come for me.

I recalled what an old lady had said to me as we were leaving Missouri: "If ever you learn to hold your shoulders up straight, honey, and get that frown off your forehead, and keep your hair out of your eyes, and quit dashing into things so hard, you goin' to grow up into a right good-lookin' young woman."

So now I stood very straight, and relaxed my forehead, and tossed my hair out of my eyes; and I said to myself "Hold it, now, hold it." And just then the minor poet came in. He had remained one of my good, dependable friends, rather feeling responsible for me, as he had sponsored me at the Press Club. He now started to speak in his usual way—then a look of surprise swept his face. He checked it instantly, however, and held my coat. He was a very punctilious minor poet, and always did everything beautifully. But I felt chilled: he didn't like my new gown.

When we entered the Press Club rooms, however, the old-time warmth and joy came back, for I was in my element. I hurried to the dressing room anxious to get out of my old coat, for, of course, I couldn't afford a new evening coat, too. I dropped the thing into the maid's hands; then, inspecting the curls to see that they were safely fastened, remembered once more to stand very straight, and keep the frown off, and everything, and hurried out, eager to see everybody.

"Hel-*lo,*" said one in a sort of astonishment; and "Look who's here" said another. But it wasn't in the old spirit. Then I met Louie and he started to speak in his funny way, then stopped, looked me over almost frowningly, then turned and very formally presented me to someone he had brought with him.

I was chilled to the marrow. No one liked my gown; and the chill deepened with each one I met. The old warmth, the old jolly half-teasing way seemed utterly to have vanished. Everywhere I was greeted formally; sometimes I even felt myself being stared at almost with incredulity.

I was perfectly miserable. All at once I felt naked in the low cut. I hated the falling down shoulders. I hated the gay colour. I hated the striking black velvet sash. I slipped away from my friends and went back to the rear of the room and snuggled down in one of the old davenports, into its broken springs and shabbiness, making myself as inconspicuous as possible. I would not get up again until I could go home. I would not dance.

Soon one of the older married women came and sat down with me. She had a headache and was leaving in a few minutes. She didn't care for dancing, anyway. I asked her if I might go with her. She said, yes, she would be glad to have me, as her husband wanted to stay for the dancing.

The minor poet came to look me up, and I told him I was going home. He objected strenuously. What was the trouble? Didn't I feel well? He would get me something—maybe an aspirin tablet would fix me up. Had I been working too closely again? In that case dancing was what I needed—some good physicial exercise. No, I insisted, I was all right, but I just had to go home. He must stay—I wanted to go with this friend.

In my rooms once more, I locked the door, then snatched and tore at that yellow gown, and the false curls, and the rats, getting them all off in a sort of fury. "It's all your fault, you loud, noisy, horrible, old thing," I screamed at the yellow gown, stamping my foot on it, screamed in a whisper, for I mustn't wake the old lady next door. "Making me miserable *at the Press Club!* Well, you won't live to make me miserable again!"

And seizing the scissors, I grabbed it up, and began cutting it into ribbons. Snip, snip, snip—— I cut and cut and cut till the poor thing lay a fuzzy heap in the middle of the floor. And then I cut up the curls, and the rats, and snatched out the hundreds of little hairpins and threw them on the pile. And at last I dropped down on to the bed and sobbed till I was too weak to finish undressing.

The next morning I swept up the débris and put it into a newspaper at the back of the closet, meaning to carry it to a garbage can when I could. The dear old lady never must know what a failure the gown had been.

CHAPTER XXV

Work now claimed me; no more Press Club evenings. Lyn came often. She had nearly one hundred dollars between the leaves of her Bible and hoped to begin travelling by August. It was a secret from Jo, who was too well pleased with her for settling down so regularly to work to be upset again.

And then, one evening in May, I came in from a trip down town, ran across the room and began to open the windows to let in the fresh air—the landlady was always closing them to keep out the dust—and stopped suddenly as the third one went up, with the realization that my spine didn't ache. "Why, what is the matter?" I thought, almost with a sense of loss. "My spine doesn't ache!"

I could scarcely believe it. For the first time since the runaway, that spine was entirely free from pain. I was afraid to stir—it might be only a lull. I moved cautiously, took a step or two, sat down, got up, walked back and forth across the room, and still my spine didn't ache! I went out into the hall, down the front steps, up again, returned to my room—and still no ache. My spine was well!

Oh, the joy of it—I was to have health! I was to have a body that could keep up! I had never quite hoped for this since the runaway, only for sufficient comfort to keep going. Long I sat in the wonder of it.

Nothing could ever make me unhappy again. Nothing could ever seem hard. I would ask no further boons from life, for I knew I could do what I wanted to do if only that spine would let me alone. And in some way there in that wonderful hour it gave me its word, and it has kept it.

I have found few Lyns—people who know nothing of physical suffering. And yet few people are interested in a pain unless they've got it. Sympathy with sickness is *not* universal. People with a perfect digestion think those without it are merely fussy. People with iron nerves have no sympathy for those with sensitive ones. There's a sort of peasant pride in good bones and muscles and blood; as though they had themselves created them, the ones who possess them. "I never lost a night's sleep in my life!" "I can eat anything!" "Noise never disturbs *me!*" "I don't know what a headache is." We hear the expressions boldly made in the presence of others who suffer from these disabilities, as though some personal virtue were responsible. I had early noticed this tendency in mortals, had learned that pain was a thing to keep still about if you would have friends, a thing to swallow hard and put down. No one I knew—not even the old lady in the front parlour—had ever been told about that ache in my spine. When I was lying down, if a rap came, I didn't answer it; so now I could tell no one of its strange going.

What had made it right on that happy May day in the morning? Frankly, I don't know: it was as if some injury it had received in the runaway was now

suddenly righted, and the long trouble over. Perhaps the hours spent before the press clipping frame, the steady movement of arm and back, in marking papers and lifting them off, eight hours of it at a stretch for so many days, had been the correct exercise. Previously I had leaned to that spine, easing it in every way I could. In the Bureau I used it. I wonder often if many semi-invalids who are gently eased into their aches by kind fortune wouldn't rouse out of them if they could make themselves shoulder those aches and go on in the game of living; if the habit of exercise and use wouldn't bring about a reaction. It would be worth trying. So many who have to keep up and keep going do wear things out.

That evening the minor poet called; he seemed to have forgotten all about my peculiar behaviour at the Press Club and was ready to be friendly again. Another big affair was on, an anniversary dinner, and everyone was engaging seats for it. I must go, he insisted.

"And wear the yellow gown," he added. "By George, but you looked stunning that night. Transfigured. For the first time, I think, we all realized you were something besides a sort of grown-up kid. Louie was deeply impressed with your sudden grown-upness. He sent word for you to be sure to come, and to wear the yellow gown."

"I'll go," I said happily, "but I won't wear the yellow gown."

"Why not? It certainly made a hit."

I went to the closet and got it—showed him.

He stared, hardly believing.

"None of you acted natural," I said. "You all made me perfectly miserable; and I thought it was because you didn't like my gaudy gown; so I chopped it up."

He was silent, staring as if he were seeing me for the first time. "Do you know," he said, presently, "I've always sensed a possible Boadicea in you." And added after a moment: "By George, could you believe it!"

"No matter now," I said gaily. "I'm so placid tonight—oh, I feel like a May day, and baskets hung on doors, and gay, fluttering ribbons! Nothing could ever stir me up again ever! Yes, indeed, I'll go to the dinner—gladly!"

"You'll want to see Demmy. You've missed a lot by staying away. Have you heard her big news? She's landed in the *Ladies' Home Journal.*"

"Demmy—in the *Ladies' Home Journal?*"

"Now where's our May day?" he said, rising and laughing. "Come, put on your hat. Several of us are going out to hear Carrie Jacobs Bond sing some of her new songs."

I went; but dancing in my head were two great facts: My spine was well; it would never trouble me again. And Demmy had landed in the *Ladies' Home Journal*—Demmy, a beautiful, hardworking girl no older than myself had set her foot clear across the threshold of becoming a writer. A girl who so recently had thought squabs were a vegetable. A girl with little brothers and sisters at home, and a mother who must manage carefully, and a father in his grave. A father, I had discovered, for whom she had had the greatest love, and whose name she meant to carry on to where

he would have been proud to have it. Demmy, clear over into the *Ladies' Home Journal.* If Demmy could do it, I could do it.

I found Carrie Jacobs Bond the most gracious body—and whimsical and dear. I liked her immediately. She had quite a roomful of people, mostly Press Club members, and the Governor and his wife, who had come up from Springfield to hear the new songs. She was in the early stages of recognition, not having yet reached the financially recognized stage, and was living in shabby old rooms over a bakery, with a big base burner for winter heat; but she was blithe of spirit, making me think of some butterfly swaying on the slim stem of a wild flower—not a bit more fixed and grooved into life.

Everyone loved her songs and her singing; that minor note in her voice—pathos, somehow, no matter what she sang; and she so gay, too; but, with all the gaiety, you felt she might burst into tears the next moment.

But I could really think of nothing but Demmy's success.

"How did you ever do it, Demmy?" I whispered.

"Just mailed them the story."

"How did you dare?"

She only smiled. It remained a marvel to me that Demmy's words—the words she put together—were to go into the *Ladies' Home Journal,* with all its pretty type and pictures. I discussed it going home with the minor poet.

"How many of the newspaper stories do you suppose you have written?" he asked.

"Oh, a hundred—maybe more."

"That's something of a record, for fiction. Of course, you can't do much revising."

I admitted the trouble: "I don't know how to revise: When John McGovern and Frederick Warde say 'revise,' I listen, and I want to, but I don't know how to go about it. I just tell my story, and that's all I know to do, except to change a word or two here and there, and maybe shorten some of the sentences."

The next evening he called early. "We are going to do some revising," he said. "Let's have a story you think is ready to mail."

I broke the seal on one. He took the manuscript and began to read it aloud; read the opening paragraph, stopped, considered, read it again.

"Oh, do get on with the story," I said impatiently.

"Whatever the story is, it has to open, doesn't it? And it should open in a way to make one want to read it. This doesn't." He read on slowly. Half through, he said, "Here's your opening—with this girl who seems quite a girl. Begin here."

When the evening was over, the story was blue-pencilled from beginning to end, and I was deeply depressed. If this was writing, writing was labour, not a joyous galloping off on an idea as on a swift horse.

"Still," I insisted, "if I keep on in my own way, I'll get it somehow, like a knack you catch. Like straightening gathers. Your mother can show you and show you and you can't for the life of you see how she does it, but if you keep working at it, all at once you're

straightening gathers and you never quite know when or how you learned."

"Writing is like swimming," he said. "You go into the water at first all excitement over merely getting in; and you splash, and kick, and send spray into other swimmers' faces, and make a nuisance of yourself generally. This may be all very well while you are growing accustomed to the water, learning to feel at home in it, to handle it, to float and crawl a little. But the time comes when, if you are to get the full measure of joy out of it, you must learn the fine, long, clean stroke that carries one straight ahead. The stroke that is technique, knowing how, knowing that you know how. Well, maybe by dashing and splashing your stories off you are losing all self-consciousness in the element, if you ever had any. But there will come a time when to keep on writing this way will be—well, as with the splasher in the water, a waste of energy, and getting nowhere. *Learn to swim.*"

He said good-night.

When I returned from letting him out, the old lady was sticking her nose through a crack in the door. "I could hear your voices," she whispered. "Was—was he—proposing?"

"He was teaching me to revise."

"Humph! The girls of this generation!" And she bobbed disgustedly back into her room. The dear old lady was irritable these days, for her husband just couldn't find a job, though he had dyed his hair and persisted in being only forty when he had actually been more than sixty years on the planet. I was terribly sorry for her, with nothing to do all day but wait for

his step on the stairs. She could tell by the way he dragged his feet whether or not he had any prospects. A son was sending them money to exist on, but the son wanted to be married, and their needs were preventing it. The whole situation was unhappy.

CHAPTER XXVI

I took up revision in earnest. I found that by reading my story over and over until I was bored with it, I became aware of the place where the interest really began and where it lagged, and also of commonplace phrasing, stereotyped expressions, and repeated thoughts. I began also to be aware of inharmonies that I had not noticed before. Some of my sentences sang themselves out rhythmically the first time I wrote them. These I let alone and tried to bring the others up to them.

Working in this way with words, phrases, sentences, after the story itself was balanced, I was soon spending days over a piece of work, working it over and over till it felt like a woven thing in my hands, pulling evenly from every direction; no hitches or caught places. And, strangely, the more I worked in this way, the better I loved it.

One evening the minor poet brought me a Roget's *Thesaurus*. I pounced on it. Here were words. Timbers for building. He read aloud the romance I had just finished, and I caught other flaws. I discovered that you never fully knew your own story till someone else read it aloud to you. Then you saw its weak places, just as you do the sag in a dress skirt worn by a friend when she goes upon a platform to speak. It's all there before you, every defect standing out.

I had now entered upon a new phase of absorption. I was in another world—a world of words. I fitted phrases to garbage cans, to men, to statues, to paintings; I roamed all over the city, collecting queer names from signs. It was amazing how often the name suggested the man's business: Dr. Kurem; Stump, real estate dealer; Walter Beach, resort listings; C. D. Lutes, musical instruments; Otto Lark, voice culture; Kilham & Kilham, undertakers; Edward Dyer, cleaner and dyer. And if I didn't run across a Mr. Tick, a clock man. It's true! I began to wonder more and more about names. Weren't they determining factors, maybe, in a life? Not just pegs to hang things on, not just designating sounds, but an influence? If a mother wanted her child to *be* something, hadn't she better give him a name that *sounded* like something? Something fine, and big, and strong, and sweeping?

I began to revel in the sound of words, the harmonies in them.

Summer came, and I didn't know it was warm. There were things to do, of course—boating with Lyn, and Press Club excursions on the lake and down the river—but I moved through these things as through a dream, eternally fitting words to people, to scenes, to situations. Absent-mindedly, I would hand the elevator boy a car fare, or walk out of the post office without paying for my stamps, only to be tapped on the shoulder by some frantically pursuing clerk. Louie said one day—dear old Louie, who took me to his home so often to have dinner with his delightful German parents—"I'm going to take you home with me so the mater can tighten that button on your jacket."

I glanced down at the linen jacket and saw that one of the large pearl buttons was hanging by a thread. It had been troubling Louie for some time, no doubt. I tested it. It would hang yet a little longer. I couldn't stop to tighten a button.

One afternoon when the sun was shining with unusual brilliance and all the world seemed summering, I had a rainstorm in mind. It came in a romance I was working on, and it kept storming so vividly—in my mind—as I entered the Press Club, and was coming in such clear-cut sentences that, fearful of losing it, I took out pencil and notebook, and, pushing past the men's coat rack, sat down at a little table near the umbrella stand, and began to jot it down. Out the phrases tumbled, faster and faster. I was deep in it, lost to everything but my imagined storm: the clouds burst, the heavens opened, the rain descended, it was a drenching, shrieking, hailing rainstorm, with lightning and thunder, and streaming pavements, and soaked clothes.

In the very wildest moment of it, a Lake Michigan breeze banged a door. Startled, I sprang to my feet, seized an umbrella, shot it open, and crouched under it. Then, becoming suddenly aware of the grinning faces all about, I came to my senses, realized I was indoors and the sun was shining.

I lowered the umbrella, said lamely to the check boy: "I thought maybe it needed repairing, but it's all right," and sat down, my face burning. The check boy looked at me from the cool superiority of perfect sanity; the men grinned more broadly still. It was a

man's umbrella, of course, not mine at all. I could have sunk without trace, gladly.

But just at that moment John McGovern came through the little gateway, his face white, his eyes wild. Everyone now turned to him. Louie was the first to reach him. "John, John, what is it?" he cried in alarm.

"Mary," gasped John. "It's Mary—she's gone——"

He sank into a chair; someone brought water; someone else something else; every face was filled with concern.

"Gone?" Louie repeated, almost as white. "Gone—Mary gone?"

"Gone," John moaned, his head in his hands. "Mary's gone—to New York."

The men drew back—all but Louie, smiling gently. Louie stayed by him, amused tenderness in his eyes. There had been renewed discussion of Mary's going to New York, and at last she had gone, with her father's consent, but her absence was tearing him in two.

"Nuts," I overheard the superior check boy mutter. "Nuts—every last one of 'em. Nothing but nuts."

And then, one day, Louie got me on the telephone. It was Louie's voice, but broken, full of tears: "Shanty, come over to the house," he said. "Father's—dead!"

I found him alone in the small library, all crumpled up in a big leather chair, the tears wet on his cheeks. He put out his hand as I went over to him, and I drew up a chair and sat down beside him, holding his

hand. Just a little boy sorrowing for his father whom he had had always, but who would never be there any more. There was nothing to say, but, oh, I knew! I knew!

And presently the door opened and John McGovern came in, so tall he looked in his black coat, so thin, with such grieved gray eyes and an armful of white roses.

"Louie," he said simply, "I wanted to lay them myself at your father's feet."

No messenger could perform this service for him; no florist's deliveryman; only his own hands.

Such fine big men . . . such dear little boys . . . both gone now. Do they meet sometimes, I wonder, and remember, and smile gently over these things of earth, as we remember, and smile gently over them?

CHAPTER XXVII

I was still working very closely, taking little time off, save Sunday mornings when I went to the Auditorium to hear Dr. Thomas. I have never heard truth spoken so profoundly and so simply as it came from the lips of this tall, aged clergyman, with his thin nasal voice and his near-sighted eyes—the papers from which he read held close to his face.

There were no aids, no announcements, no songs, no reading—nothing at all but the great auditorium filled to overflowing with people who ceased rattling papers and scraping feet, and coughing the moment the aged gentleman in his long black coat stepped out on to the platform. He began to read at once, and everyone strained to hear, still as death. It was so definite a message. You felt in the presence of Mind reacting directly to Light. Always there were many Press Club men in the congregation, especially the so-called "ungodly" ones, listening as to an oracle. Dr. Thomas spoiled me forever after for pyrotechnics in the pulpit.

The large Eastern magazines were now my goal; and while trying to write for these I was under necessity to pay my way with the *News* funny column and the syndicate stories. It was a heavy strain to work at both. "I've got to break through," I would say to myself as I went about the streets steadily on the lookout for copy. "It's as if a cover were fastened

down over me—a tight copper cover—and I were reaching up and hammering, hammering, hammering. It can't resist always. There are dents now—it must give in time."

It became more and more irritating to have to spend good fresh hours on the smaller work when I was so eager to do the larger. Above all things, I now craved my time, all of my time. I resented everything that ate into it, everything that interrupted. But the hardest thing of all was having to keep on doing the little stories. I dreamed of wild plans to secure all my time for the magazine work. I wanted to put myself into it full steam—all my energy, all my thoughts. Life seemed pounding at my door: it filled and thrilled me, and ran riot through all my being; flashes of insight came, vistas of thought opened up—and here I must tread cautiously, and write my little stories, and earn my little checks, and meet my little obligations; and another month would be gone, and I would be just where I was at the beginning, not ahead any place, but on the calendar.

I thought of crimes—nice gentle crimes; crimes that were just crimes enough to get you in jail, maybe in solitary confinement, with stacks of white paper and a typewriter. Oh, where was there a nice safe crime? Show it to me and I'd commit it without a qualm. And I thought, if I were making a government, I might provide prisons for the law breakers; but alongside each prison I'd provide commodious quarters for people who wanted to write something, or paint something, or make music or poems, the creators who had it in them, maybe, but couldn't get it out because they

must earn their bread. And I almost believed that in my government, in the course of time, the prisons would be empty, and could be converted into additional quarters for the creators. For if everyone could do the biggest and best thing that is in him to do, without such heavy obstacles to overcome, it would just naturally crowd out all the tendency to crime.

Your work—your own work—that I believed was everyone's need and salvation.

Lyn burst in one afternoon when I was pacing the floor over it. "There's one way," she said, knowing immediately what was the matter, for I now had no other problem.

"Name it!"

"Go as a travelling companion to an old lady."

"How in the world would that give me my time?"

"Well, they have to snooze, don't they?"

"How would I get the job?"

"Answer an ad; give corking references."

"And where would I get the reference?"

"I'll give you one. And you give me one; let's both go. Haven't we travelled a lot together, on the water?"

I looked my disgust and went on pacing.

"I mean it!" she exclaimed. Springing up, she folded her arms like Napoleon, shut her mouth grimly, and began to pace too. I had to laugh; you couldn't take yourself seriously very long, around Lyn. "I can't wait much longer to start travelling," she said. "I'll start soon if I don't get any farther than—Elkhart!" With that she grabbed up a paper and hurled herself on the classifieds. "And here's the very old lady!" she exclaimed. "What luck! Three of them! All want-

ing travelling companions." She flung herself down at the machine and wrote furiously. Presently she handed me several sheets; an application for the job, and a letter of reference for me, in which she said she had had me employed all summer, and found me kind, attentive, cheerful and willing to read aloud forever. "I didn't know just what to say about you," she explained, "as I'm not sure of a companion's duties; but you do as well now by me."

I did, emphasizing Lyn's fitness for travel, her absence of seasickness, her pleasant voice, her Irish wit, and her good character. "Her aunt gave her the *Christian Herald* for a Christmas present," I added, "which indicates her temperament."

Lyn glowered over that last line; but she hated too badly to write to ask me to do the letter over again; and insisted that we prepare a third application for the third old lady.

"Now, that's a good day's work," she said. "Let's go sail."

"Lyn, you are absurd!" I flared about on her. "You've no more stability—than a jack rabbit!"

She glared: "Well, maybe you're absurd yourself," she countered hotly.

"And what do you mean by that?"

"Drubbing away every minute! Cornering musty old writers and asking them things when you could be sailing with a jolly crew! I must say I can't care for your choice of boy friends. Anyway, I heard one of them say you were *funny,* having to be a writer all so quick."

"Lyn, you make me so mad, answering fool ads,

when if you'd only stick you could develop into a great humorist, and we need them, goodness knows! There's more of everything else in the world."

"Gosh, woman," she returned, her fury gone, "can't you realize that I want to travel as badly as you want to write? I've been on the earth eighteen years, and I've never been seventy miles from where I was born; and I'm going if I have to tramp it!"

She flung out with the letters; but our efforts were wasted. The one old lady, it developed, had put in all three ads, wanting to comb the market and get the best, and naturally, receiving all our letters, she recognized the ruse and answered none of them. Lyn's friendship with the boy at the classified desk brought her this information.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Saturday I went out to Clare's house to stay over Sunday. Poor little Clare, still body-bound, but burning with zeal to be a part of the big active world. She always had a dream aboard, though her dreams changed from time to time. Just now she wanted to establish umbrella stands all over the city for renting umbrellas on rainy days. She had wanted to put a simpler method of shorthand that she had invented on the market. And she had wanted to introduce in millinery wholesale houses a method that she had perfected for tinting flowers. She had an eager mind, and it was continually finding new ways of doing the old things, or new things to do for the convenience of mortals on the earth.

When I awoke Sunday morning at Clare's, I sprang up quickly and ran into her room, and there she was in the midst of her big wide bed, rising like a slim white lily out of a mound of newspapers. She had had them all brought in and was searching for some special idea in advertising.

I crawled into bed with her, and we continued to look through the papers together, until her mother came to say that Mandy had breakfast ready, and there were waffles and maple syrup, and we'd better hurry, for she felt a terrific appetite coming on, and she was as likely as not to eat them all.

Mandy was the big fat coloured woman who made them comfortable in their roomy old-fashioned house 'way out on the South Side, and babied them both as if they had been her children. They were always going to give up the big house and move into the "Winderpole" as Clare's mother called it in her absurd Irish way of twisting names, and I never knew whether it was the "Windermere" or the "Metropole" that she had chosen, both being South Side family hotels; but the change was never made because they could never decide what to do about Mandy.

I loved being with Clare, for she was not only a dear whimsical person with the most cunning little Irish mother forever at her nonsense, trying to hold us to girlhood and keep us from being so deadly earnest over our "careers"; but she could sympathize with my head-on determination to succeed quickly. Then her lameness drew me to her. I would look at her sometimes, so slight, so delicate, but so *burning,* some way, to be active, till the tears would fill my eyes. Clare just must have her chance. It wasn't fair that she should be held back by her body all her days.

But what games her mother played to keep us in our youth. She would come into the room where we were poring over ads, all solemn and unconcerned, but wearing the most ridiculous hat; or a nightcap all awry, or with her face blacked up, do a cake walk with Mandy, dragging her in, poor Mandy shaking her fat sides with laughter; or tie on an old plaid shawl and do a Highland fling; or make us listen to a brand-new story about her foreign youngsters at school. She was always playing vaudeville to her two

serious-minded cubs—for she had quite adopted me—who she thought were missing something, by their intentness on their problems, more valuable than anything they would ever gain.

"Play, children, play," she would say. "Never mind the old ads. Be happy. You'll never be young again."

But we didn't have time to be young, Clare and I. Dear little Clare, with her lame foot, and her lily-pale face, and her sparkling wit, making a fortune a few years later. "Yes, I lost $20,000 our war year," she told me on one of my flying trips through, "but I made it up; not much to lose, for the war." But this was after her mother's body had been laid away in a grave. Somehow, I can never think of flowers for Clare's mother's grave: only a brave little evergreen tree, rooted and growing, its green branches catching up sparkles from the sun, or tossing off raindrops, or holding up the weight of winter snows, all with the same blithe spirit.

Sometimes, in those early struggling days, I ran to her as to a refuge, my heart aching with wanting; and sometimes in jubilation, for there was never anyone quite so sympathetic when a bit of success came your way; and always, no matter what the mood, with a sense of coming fulfilment, and it never failed.

Back in my rooms again, refreshed by my visit with Clare, full of ideas, I fairly pounced upon my work, meaning to get a little story off quickly, before I lost the zest for the other thing. I went at it furiously, thinking to hurry it through, but holding fast to the other in the background of my mind.

But alas, when I had finished the story, I was tired,

the impetus gone. It had come a little flatly, holding on to the other thing all the time, and I had to spend more good long hours pepping it up. When it was finally finished and in the mails, my mind was chaotic, all mixed up with two streams of thinking, and I couldn't, quickly, separate the two.

I tried all sorts of things to bring about a quick change from one line of thought to another; expedients to shut one story out while working on another. I'd say, "Now, to-day, Mind, you're all on this; but to-morrow, you must be every bit on that." I tried drawing down the blinds and thumb-tacking them closely, so not a ray of light could come in; then I would light a candle to write by—all the physical world shut out, all the thoughts but the one I wanted to develop shut out. This helped, but it wasn't altogether successful, because of the close air.

It was maddening . . . wonderful thoughts flashing in . . . phrases of truth . . . vistas opening up . . . getting well started on a piece of work of a different order; then to have to stop and write a silly story about how Jenny won back her sweetheart, or Dick got his raise and so could marry the girl of his desire.

"It's killing me—this eternal starting and stopping," I repeated the wail to the minor poet when he called one evening and found me restive and irritable. "I'm like a well that has to be primed afresh every time the flow is stopped, and sometimes I just can't get it going again, with all the priming. I want to write what's in my mind *while it's there.* I tell you, it's killing me!"

"It's killing many people," he said. He told me about a newspaper columnist we both knew who was driving himself to do his light chatter every day when he was full of the urge to do other work. "Poor chap, he'll go mad, or merely dull, over it. But he has a wife and three babies, and they must eat. If he had a quiet place like this where he could work undisturbed, he would think he was in heaven. His wife is not the comprehending type. She was telling me only last night at the club that she had moved the children out of the nursery and fitted it up for a study for her husband. 'I'm going to let him have a place to himself for three weeks,' she said, "and if he hasn't produced one of his masterpieces by *then,* I shall move the children back!' "

"Of course, I'm in luck," I said. "I haven't a wife, and I have my rooms."

He took up my latest story. "You have improved mightily since your book."

"You needn't knock my book."

"I'm not; but the improvement is rather startling; so much firmer grasp on the realities. You've grown."

"If I have, it's because you men of the Press Club have helped me."

"There's a way you could get your time," he said presently, looking up from the pages.

"Name it!"

"You could marry."

I drew back. "How in the world would that give me my time? Just look at wives!"

"Here's a secret: Demmy is going to be married."

"Really? When she wants only to write?"

"That's the idea; so she can. She's marrying that nice engineer that we met the other night at the Press Club. He recognizes Demmy's gift, and he's going to free her to develop it. Her study comes first in the new home. He won't ask her to be a real wife so far as running the house is concerned; he's providing a responsible housekeeper."

"But it won't work. Someone will get a toothache, or earache, or headache, or something, and she'll have to be on the job. I know exactly what I want to do while I'm on the earth, and I can't risk getting sidetracked. I almost was once—I was almost made into a teacher. And do you know, to this day, when I get overtired, all night I dream of being back in the schoolroom again, caught there, as in a trap. Unable to get out, to get to my work. And I wake in a cold sweat over the horror of it. It pursues me like a ghost. If ever for a moment I feel like giving up—as though I might be forced to give up—that awful thing yawns under me as the thing I'd drop into; and I rouse out of discouragement and run from it, like something wild! I don't think it's just teaching that I run from, but from anything at all that might engulf me and keep me from doing the work I want to do. Teaching is the horror, because it's the thing that almost did."

He looked at me queerly: "I believe you are one girl who knows exactly what she wants," he said, as though he were only now fully sensing it, then added, "Funny girl," and left.

CHAPTER XXIX

I stopped doing the little *News* stories, though I loved the association with the paper. It had been a valuable training, too, teaching conciseness, and the habit of looking on the lighter side of things, and awareness of the public. I had formed the habit, also, of reading papers, of keeping abreast of the times, of knowing what was going on everywhere in the world. I even read the advertisements, skimming through the classifieds, and keeping in touch with the kind of jobs mostly in demand, and the kind of employees needed. This habit had now become so fixed with me that if by any chance I failed to read a paper one day, I went back and read it the next, fearing I might have missed a valuable day out of the world's history. But, after all, the *News* column was not the kind of work I wanted to do. I knew I would never make a great humorist, so it was rolling the ball up the wrong hill, for me. I began to hound the *Tribune* again.

"Go interview Lincoln," said the editor one day.

"Lincoln? Why, he's dead!"

The editor lifted his eyes and looked at me very solemnly from under his green eye shade: "The son, Robert T., over in the Pullman offices. Get a line on the railroad situation." He dropped his eyes again to his reading.

I hurried away and located Mr. Lincoln's office, but

an office boy was on guard, as usual. It was noon, and he was munching away at a hot dog. When he went to get a drink to wash down the last bite, I slipped past him, down the corridor to a door. It was ajar. I peeped in. The room was empty, but a man's hat was on the desk; so Mr. Lincoln couldn't be far away. I sat down near the desk to wait. Through a window I could see an expanse of blue lake and white sailboats floating lazily.

I fell to dreaming; soon I was off in a world of my own, a timeless world of dreams and imaginings. Mr. Lincoln came in, stopped, looked gravely at me, came on to his desk, sat down. I was aware of him, but he was no longer important, the dream held me. Scarcely coming out of it, I asked him a question about the railroad situation, and named my paper.

He stared coldly: "Your editor is quite aware that I do not give interviews," he said.

Yes, I said, I supposed that was so. But if he would only talk a little wee bit, he didn't have to say much —just anything.

The warm air, the fleecy clouds, the blue water, the little sailboats, my dream. . . . I was not there in that stuffy little room, really, I was away in another world, in which this one scarcely figured. . . . humdrum . . . not worth spoiling a dream for . . . Soon— I don't know how it began—I realized that Mr. Lincoln was talking, in a level, monotonous voice. I caught "railway policy," "expansion" . . . "development." And then he was on his feet, the interview was over, and with a shock I realized I hadn't the slightest idea what he had said.

What was I to do? If I owned up to the editor that I had got the interview and hadn't listened, I would be ruined forever with him; if I said I had failed to get it, that would be ruin, too. Slowly, trying to think of a way out, I dragged my steps back to the office, went in, and sat down, completely wilted.

One of the news writers looked up: "Aw, don't take it so to heart," he said kindly. "The old man didn't expect you to get that interview. Lincoln don't see reporters. It was just a way to get rid of you."

I opened my mouth to tell him that I had got the interview, when the editor came in, glanced at me as he might at a fly on a bald man's head, or something else sufficiently pestering to wish it weren't there; then he said: "Go over to Marshall Field's and see the new manager. Ask him about any change of policy. He'll talk for you."

I saw that he meant it; and still without giving myself away, I hurried out. I had had my lesson: I was wide awake now, and I listened, gluing every word the new manager said to my memory. Later, I returned to the office and wrote it out quickly, before I should forget a single phrase.

"Run it Sunday," said the editor, glancing through my copy, then tossing it to his secretary; and once more he buried his head in his manuscripts.

From now on I did personality stories for the *Tribune;* they appeared in the *Worker's Magazine,* a supplement to the Sunday paper. I loved interviewing big men and getting their life stories, learning why they had succeeded and why failed, and what they thought about it all. Sometimes they wouldn't talk

very fluently, and I would have to advance an idea and say, "Isn't that so?" And then they would nod their heads, and say, "Yes, yes—that is so." Afterward, in my story, I would quote them, writing speeches that were supposed to have come out of their mouths; and it was these inarticulate ones, generally, who sent for extra copies of the paper to mark and send to their friends. They liked having ascribed to them what they couldn't do, better, apparently, than merely being given credit for the important things they actually had done. Men were funny.

Others talked readily and easily. I found almost everyone could talk entertainingly on his own work. It was only when asked to give theories about success that they were dumb. They had no theories, mostly. Another thing, successful men, I found, were only successful in about fifty-one per cent. of the things they undertook. But they never advertised their failures or bewailed their hard luck; they merely gritted their teeth and went at it again. This was most of the real difference between successes and failures.

But this kind of writing took more time than had the little *News* stories. Interviewing people, making appointments, waiting on their convenience—it was all time absorbing. So I began to try to write my stories without interviewing anyone.

I had heard so many stories of success that I had a good deal to draw on, so this worked very well for a while. Then, one day, I was right up against it for Sunday copy; it was already time for matter to be in, and I hadn't a ghost of an idea. There was a dinner at the Press Club that evening, so I dropped in, thinking

I might pick up something. And there I ran plump into James Hamilton Lewis, United States Congressman, from Washington; "Dude" Lewis, they used to call him in Seattle, the man who had such elaborate manners, and pink whiskers, and wore spats.

Old-time stories came back: stories of his longshoreman days, his mining days, his day-labouring days—'way back there when he first came to Seattle from Georgia. His political enemies used to say that he actually had worked a few days at each of these lowly callings, so he would be able to go among the workers later, when he wanted their votes, and say, "I was once one of you"—a veritable horny-handed son of toil.

He had had the reputation, too, of getting up an eccentric appearance for purposes of publicity—not that he really was eccentric. They said he would work all night over a speech, practising his gestures before a mirror, and timing his tears, and training his voice to tremble at the dramatic moment, only to go before an audience and deliver it with the casual air of something wholly impromptu and that he laboured arduously to achieve the impression of being a clever, loafing fellow, to whom honours came as butterflies that might alight on his very good-looking shoulders.

And then—oh, that was my pitfall! I overheard him say he was going to Europe, was leaving that night for New York. . . . I had the material for my story: he would be away, he would never know, and what was one more story to James Hamilton Lewis?

I hurried home and thumped it out, made him absurd at times, but uncanny, too, in his power to see

through men and conditions. I made it such an intimate study, and painted his appearance so accurately, that, in closing, I thought best to leave his name out. But I mentioned the fact that this very unique gentleman out of the Far West had now come to Chicago, and his success methods in his latest adopted home would no doubt be interesting to watch.

It was one of the liveliest sketches I had written. I was quite happy about it, hurrying it down to the office. And by getting it so easily, I managed to steal quite a little time for the work I hungered to do.

But alas! When I went to the Press Club the following Friday, there was James Hamilton Lewis! Before I could make my escape, he was before me, bowing low, and smiling and holding out his beautiful hand. I had had that hand strongly impressed on my memory from watching his gestures in the political speeches I had heard him make in the West: a delicate hand, like a woman's, but strong, some way, as if strung, under all the whiteness and softness, with steel.

I saw at once that he had read the story and of course recognized it as his own: "Well, Mr. Lewis, I'm sorry," I said, facing it, there being nothing else to do. "I hadn't a thing in the world against you, and I tremendously admire you for having found a way of your own to get the world to listen to you. But you see, I just had to get my copy in, and seeing you the other night reminded me of all those stories I had heard, and I didn't think of a thing but what a good story it would make. Anyway, I supposed you had gone to Europe, and wouldn't know anything about it, and it wouldn't do you any harm."

"My dear, my dear," he said in his nice voice—that well-trained voice—still holding my hand, "I am most grateful to you. It was a beautiful story; *but use my name next time; use my name.*"

With that he turned to friends who had gathered near, and said: "I knew this little girl when she went to school in Seattle and came into church every Sunday with a dozen other schoolgirls in braids and middies."

I was astonished; and yet that was where I had seen James Hamilton Lewis oftenest, in the Methodist church where a number of us lined up in one of the pews every Sunday. We would watch him come in and swish out his silk handkerchief and, leaning forward, rest his head on it in prayer, as they always do in the Episcopal church, but not necessarily in the Methodist. Then we would look at each other and giggle. But we would have giggled just the same if he hadn't been there. But to think of his having seen and remembered anything so unimportant as a giggling schoolgirl! I had occasion to note that remarkable memory of his at other times, later on. He seemed never to forget a face, or, on a second meeting, to have forgotten where he had seen it before. No doubt this had its bearing on his remarkable success in winning every post he ever actually sought; this, as well as his beautiful graciousness and his aptness. He seemed to see into your *mind,* and speak to what he found *there* instead of merely into your face, and to speak of the obvious things all about. So many politicians are so busy being pleasant that they never say a thing you remember afterward. I remember his saying once,

apropos of nothing, but looking me steadily in the eyes:

"He travels fastest who travels alone, *when he travels by his head.* Remember that qualifying phrase—people generally overlook it and quote only the first part—*when he travels by his head.*"

The words stayed in my mind: and other words kept coming back from time to time: words spoken by an editor about people on newspapers "living a life of going to do and dying with nothing done." These words made me flinch—it was like a warning. What was I doing already but "living a life of going to do"? Would I die "with nothing done"? I would not! These words haunted me until I gave up newspaper work altogether.

CHAPTER XXX

I next accepted a salaried position on a small trade magazine. The field of the magazine was advertising: I was to be editor, in full command. My idea was that, by writing for a lesser magazine, I might prepare in a way for larger ones. At any rate, it seemed the next step.

And now I entered on an entirely new phase of life: an office position, with regular hours, and many duties, and a large room full of employees; a buzz-saw existence with everyone working at top speed like so many engines trying to make a steep grade. I went rapidly from one thing to another. Soon I was reading proof, writing advertising copy, preparing matter for booklets and folders, describing the beauties of a new cemetery, the worth of a set of books, the value of business training; fighting with printers, learning about woodcuts and half-tones and type faces and paper and ink.

It was exciting and engrossing. The men I worked with were keen and shrewd, quick thinkers, fine advertisers, money makers, sharpening themselves into just that—tools to make money. I enjoyed following their minds, listening to their sharp analysis of an ad I would write. Words took on a new meaning for me, they weren't merely things of beauty any more, making rhythm and harmonious sounds, they were *respon-*

sible things. For they changed conditions, changed people, created new attitudes. They were *live* things, they were dynamos, they were things to handle carefully—like bombs.

Months of this, of using words to make people buy, using words to make them do your will, using words to catch and then control. It seemed to me sometimes that we were driving a frisky team and didn't dare take our eyes off it for a moment, or something might happen that would make everything go to smash. It was such a strong hold you had on the public—but such a delicate one. You couldn't play with the public; you had to be sincere; a false note was as discernible as in an orchestra. They could be all with you one day and all against you the next. Words were thought given body, the body mattered, but oh, the thought mattered most! I would go to bed at night thinking over the driving points in an argument. Did they ring true? *Were* they true? Then I'd dream it out differently and get up in the night to jot down my dreamings. Awake or asleep, I never let go the reins.

The president of the company began saying nice things about my work; said I was developing advertising brains, and they were a very special sort. Everybody didn't have them. Some of the very best writers could not do a thing with advertising. He had tried out several. He wouldn't be surprised, if I kept on and stuck to it, to see me one of the best copy writers in America. I had the knack and the enthusiasm, and I didn't waste words. And then the day came when he raised my salary appreciably and suggested that

they might even give me stock, in time—make me a member of the firm.

This startled me. Had I lost the trail? "Look out," a little voice seemed to whisper, "you'll be sidetracked again, first thing you know." I recalled the newspaper men with great poems in their souls who were writing doggerel—would, probably, all their days, for there were babies to feed. Of course, the babies must be fed, but something had to starve, and so they were going about with haggard faces because of the thing that had starved in them.

That evening at the Press Club I joined a group of my good friends—old Colonel Visscher, and the "Commodore," and Charles Eugene Banks, the poet —and I told them what the president of my firm had said about some day giving me stock and possibly making me a member of the company.

That was splendid, they all agreed, with emphatically nodding heads. Nothing like being substantial on the earth, really on your own feet, with a sure place. Books now, even when you could manage the time to write them, were all a gamble. I hadn't had much of anything from my book, now, had I? Not enough to pay my board, probably, while I was writing it? I staunchly maintained that I had, not admitting that I had spent but two weeks in its production; I knew they wouldn't believe it, and I was now ashamed of having done it so quickly. But I admitted that the book hadn't paid, not like advertising. There you are! See? That's the way it went with a book. They nodded wisely over it. While with advertising, there was more money and less work. A number of the free lancers were going

over to it, and eating regularly now for the first time in many moons. "Nothing like it," reiterated one of the idealistic old dreamers who was always broke, always with ragged edges, always borrowing.

"Just slip a half dollar in my pocket when I'm not looking. Nothing like it," he repeated; "nothing like being secure on the earth; it's the first duty; that's where I made my mistake—following dreams."

"There's nothing like keeping your wings," I retorted, and resigned.

CHAPTER XXXI

World Events, a New York publication, next came into my life, and paid my bills. The editor had noticed my little editorials in the advertising magazine and wrote, asking for something similar. He offered me much better than newspaper rates, so I was glad to accept.

I hadn't seen Lyn in weeks when a letter came from her postmarked somewhere in the Black Mountains. She said she was *selling popcorn.* She had finally got enough money between the leaves of her Bible to start travelling, and just then a travelling salesman—one of her yacht-club friends—came into town and told her of a far-off region down South where there wasn't so much as a popcorn wagon to lighten the days. It had struck Lyn as tragedy that there were people on the earth who didn't know the merry whistle of the popcorn wagon, the joy in a fresh, hot sack of buttered popcorn; so she had immediately invested her money in a popcorn wagon, shipped it to the desolate town, and quickly followed.

"Now, when I see a man coming down street," she wrote, "I just wonder one thing about him—if he likes popcorn. . . . Of course, Jo is furious."

Pretty Lyn, with her dancing purple eyes and her engaging ways, *selling popcorn!* But, oh, well, I was thinking presently, that's Lyn's idea of the flight for

her. And who is Jo, shut up in a gilded cage all day counting dirty money, to say that her choice—out in the fresh mountain air—is less desirable than his; and, anyway, it's Lyn's choice. Life was like that; you wanted to choose, wanted to make your own mistakes, if they *were* mistakes; the other thing wasn't living—it was being shot through.

And such a few years later I was to have another vivid letter from Lyn, written in London: she had been to Paris, to the Isle of Man, to many of the places of her dreams. "Isn't it fun to live your own life?" she wrote. She was "travelling on her troubles," she said, "which you taught me to cash, and for which I can never be grateful enough." (Paying her way with writing.) "If I took time to tell you about the Lord Mayor's parade, and the powdered-wigged coachmen, and the funny times I have shopping, I'd send it to a paper and get a check for it; and anyway, you know how badly I hate to write. . . ."

Dear old Lyn, she hadn't allowed herself to be sidetracked, even to become a famous humorist, which she so easily could have done. She was following her will, which might be the "wind's will," but it really seemed more important.

Also I heard from Hester: she had married a young man in her company but had promptly divorced him. The marriage had not helped on her career, so she had ejected the man as matter-of-factly as she had her teeth. The letter sounded cold—cold with a white sort of flame, blue white—just the old Hester. One thing I knew, Hester would never accept failure. She would try one thing after another, never wasting a

moment on anything that didn't advance her career. I felt sorrier for Hester than for any ambitious girl I knew, because of all that had died in her, but more sure of her success. And truly enough, a few years later, the movies did it for her. She photographed well.

Demmy was all absorption in her home these days, and soon it was a baby. I envied Demmy; but would she ever write as she had wanted to? That was the trouble with life. You couldn't have everything—not your stories and your babies, too—not very well.

More time had passed than I liked to think about. I hadn't got very far—quitting jobs went against me. Each time it had raised a small rumpus. Not that I was indispensable, but the bother of breaking in new people. What was the trouble? editors and employers wanted to know. I seemed happy enough in the work, and really I was. Was it more pay? Shorter hours? What *did* I want? Probably the need could be met if I'd only mention it. A private office—how would I like that?

Mr. Handy had looked at me wearily, for I had stormed his office so persistently to be taken on; then said something about feeling inclined never again to employ a woman—she always wanted to change. Just got the work in hand so she was really useful, then wanted to quit, do something else. Even the Press Clipping Bureau manager had grumbled. And the advertising people had made offers.

None of them seemed to understand that I had a goal and was trying to reach it. Jobs were the thing. If you had a good job, you were lucky. If you gave

it up, you were crazy, would probably land in the poorhouse. And yet, in theory, they all knew about that hunger for one's own work, could talk eloquently about it, give tragic instances of thwarting, but when it actually came to sacrificing a good paying position, they were scandalized. "You'll be just as tired of the next thing in a little while," I heard that on all sides. "All work is routine, after you've learned the ropes; it's only adventure while you're learning them." "Go on, smile your Mona Lisa smile, but you'll see the day you'll have to admit that I told you so."

I turned again to short stories of a better order, worked hard, did my human best, and began to bombard Eastern magazines with them—but they came back. I wonder if there is any other well so deep and dark and all-engulfing as that well into which an editor lets you down when he sends a letter saying, no matter how pleasantly: "I can't use this story," a story you have fairly ached your life into. At first I tried to be philosophical about it. I reasoned—well, I'm new to them, they probably never heard of my book; anyway, a book published in Chicago might not count with New Yorkers. Maybe they don't even read my manuscripts. They were returned so promptly and with such regularity that it really seemed as if the gun that shot stories into editors' sanctums turned right around and shot them out again. I would begin all over on still another one, once more work up to a high pitch of belief, be sure that at last I had a story no editor would turn down—but back it would come.

The thing began to cloud all my days. The moment I dropped a manuscript into the mail box, I'd begin to

be haunted by a dread of its return. When a letter would come from a publisher to whom I had mailed a story—I kept a number in the mails all the time—I would shove it deep into my pocket and keep it several hours, sometimes days—before opening it. I would say to myself: "I don't *want* my story in that editor's magazine. I'm sorry I put it in his power to acquire a story of mine. I do hope he is returning it, for this will be a tactful way of getting it out of his hands."

I would even go for a tramp along the lake shore; get myself well off into dreams where nothing of earth mattered; float along in cloudland, forgetting all mundane things. And at last, after hours of this, when I felt myself securely anæsthetized, I would say—oh, quite nonchalantly—"There's that tiresome letter; well, better read it; it's only courtesy after an editor has taken the time to write, to read what he has to say; not that it's important."

Then I would indifferently break the seal, only to find there, perhaps, a filled-in blank in which "The Editors" informed me that my manuscript had reached them and would be passed upon in due time. And that agony to be gone through with again!

I lost weight, lost appetite, almost lost faith: and then I turned upon the problem and tried to solve it. What had I been writing? Dream things, imagined things, tragic things. I took stock of my capital—*experience*. Why not write about life, instead of forgetting life in a dream? Life was interesting; life offered—everything! I tried a new tack. Pounced upon it. Wrote a series of twelve hard-hitting articles dealing

with women in business, as I had seen them, had known them. I mailed the first one to the *Delineator,* and went to work revising the second. Before it was finished, a letter came from Mr. Theodore Dreiser, who was acting editor at the time, accepting my manuscript. I mailed him the second, and he accepted it; the third, and he accepted it; the fourth, the fifth, the sixth, the seventh, on through to the twelfth, and he accepted them all. I began to feel spooky about it toward the end, felt as if I were playing from a lead that surely could not go around again, but it did. Naturally, as it was a series on one subject, if interested, he would want them all. But I had the feeling that I must sort of slip them in, one at a time, or his left hand might notice what his right was doing, and stop it.

Other letters began to come from his office with proof sheets, signed "Mary Curtis, Assistant Editor." Generally about shortening or condensing or something of the kind. I wondered a great deal about this Mary Curtis; some college grind, I imagined, in horn-rimmed glasses with a green eye shade, peering through a microscope to find a flaw. I had never known a woman editor. I felt safer, some way, with Mr. Dreiser. A man was more inclined to see the general sweep of a thing than a woman; she was apt to become hung up on a defect. At the club it seemed as if it was always the women who criticized the little defects in big men; the men were more inclined to see past the defect to the general bigness. I rather dreaded Mary Curtis.

Next I did an article a little more daring as to theme and sent it to the *Ladies' Home Journal.* It was

accepted with a delightful letter from Mr. Edward Bok, in which he said:

> You may always feel assured that anything you may send us will be read with nine leanings in its favour after writing such an excellent article.

The check was for $75, the largest I had so far received. I celebrated with a dinner to my friends; but for the first time with this congenial little group I was anything but hilarious. A quiet joy filled me. I didn't want a jazzy grille—I wanted sanctuary. How many, many times I had prayed God: "Just let me through as a writer—let me write the thoughts that come—and I won't ask for another thing on our earth." I began to feel that maybe I was to be let through.

New York came more and more into my mind. In Chicago were my friends, the Press Club, and the city itself was forever a glow in my heart; but I must go to New York. It seemed the next step.

It would have been a simple matter to collect letters of introduction, but always I disliked being introduced; someone was responsible for you then; you were responsible *to* someone. I wanted to be free to find my own New York as I had my own Chicago. It was like exploring deep, dark mountain trails, or cañons that sliced through tawny foothills; what you found remained forever yours; what somebody led you to and pointed out to you was just a "sight" that was anybody's. Exploration and discovery gave title. And it made the thing thrilling.

As the train pulled away from the station, and a considerable group of my friends, who had come bear-

ing gifts—the minor poet had brought a whole pack of cards and notes from Press Club members—I began to feel a bit shaky. Maybe I was wrong: here I was speeding toward New York where I didn't know a soul, wasn't even sure at what hotel to stop, had no very definite idea what I would do when I got there, and in the heat of early summer. With the disappearance of the last fluttering handkerchief, I began to feel pretty down, then remembered the letters, and turned to them for comfort.

Such dear letters, full of friendship, and good will, and good wishes, and tucked-in bits of advice, and warning. Dear old Colonel Visscher had done it in verse. He had written on a card, in his small, precise, old-fashioned penmanship:

To Anne Shannon Monroe:

The tiger's cub was gentle and it played with a little child;
Its feet were velvet cushions and its brown eyes meek and mild;
The changes came so softly that its playmate had not seen
The cruel claws in velvet, and the brown eyes glinting green.
The child is lying mangled, in the fierce and reeking jaws,
For the tiger's cub has torn him, 'neath his velvet, hidden claws.

This is a lesson that I know you do not need;
But 'tis meet to keep it near you, where there's much of grasping greed.
Oft times the greatest danger lurks where only kindness shows
As thorns are often hidden 'neath the beauties of the rose.

William Lightfoot Visscher.

Dear hearts . . . protecting thoughts . . . warnings . . . Everyone warning me about the dangers of New York as in Tacoma I had been warned

about the dangers in Chicago. Everybody afraid of the bad in everybody else, in everything strange. But the tenderness in it brought tears. Such dear old men; I'd probably never see them again. Such dear days—out to Zelda's, out to Clare's, out to Louie's. . . . The old Press Club—homes in the background, kindness in hearts—all so dear, so dear—it didn't bear thinking about. . . .

But presently I began to be thrilled by the sense of adventure. I was off on the second lap of the high flight, once more going into strangeness. What did it hold for me, that strangeness? What was waiting that I should give up so much for it?

CHAPTER XXXII

The moment I stepped off the train, I loved New York. It was so bright, and light, some way, with its white sky and sunny air, and splotches of red in old brick buildings, and white paint. So different from Chicago's drabness. But Chicago's drabness had not entered into her people, and Chicago, too, had lovely parks, and streets, and vistas. But you had to go and find them; you didn't step right into them when you got off the train. New York seemed gay and light and happy, right there at Grand Central Station.

I crossed over to the Grand Central Hotel, and met a stony stare of suspicion in the clerk when he found I was travelling alone. I felt that I simply couldn't stay in a hotel that had the attitude of believing the worst of you. So I merely asked a question, as though that was all I had come in for, anyway, and went out again.

Where now? I thought of the M—— L——, where only women went. Clare had mentioned it. After consulting a policeman whose English was difficult to understand, I boarded a street car, and consulting a conductor whose English was still more difficult, and his manners worse, finally reached this hostelry. I thought, I could have taken a taxicab, instead of dragging about with a suitcase and getting snubbed, but if I

had, I shouldn't have discovered right away the superiority of the manners of Chicago policemen and conductors over those of New York. It was something to remember, when writing a story. I should have supposed, naturally, that all policemen and conductors in all great cities were about alike, and would have been in error.

A long line was waiting to get to the desk; and when you did get there, you had a blank to fill out, telling a great many private things about yourself. These New Yorkers didn't trust their instincts about people, it seemed; they had to have it in writing, from you yourself, that you were an all-right person. And you couldn't be a Jewess, or a Catholic, or a domestic, or a wife, or a lady of leisure, or unknown, and stay at the M——L——. As I waited to be passed upon before being given a room, lines Mamma always said she wanted on her tombstone, came into my mind:

> There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female, for ye are all one man in Christ Jesus.

I could see why they'd been written, 'way back there in Bible days. Well, we still needed them.

I was thankful for the kindly spirit, however, that had made this place possible, and I found the workers attentive and helpful. They took me in, and I decided to find an apartment immediately. The best plan—so the girl in the rental bureau told me—was to sub-rent someone's apartment for the summer months. It was far cheaper, you could secure a nicer home in a better neighbourhood, and she had some exceptionally attrac-

tive ones listed. She gave me several addresses, and I started out early the next morning.

It was an ideal way to learn the streets, for no conductor knew anything about any street but the one he crossed and where he crossed it. I just had to ramble around and find out what I could for myself. All the conductors seemed foreign, with little respect for you merely because you were a mortal. They seemed instinctively snobbish.

I found stuffy little apartments—mere holes to crawl into—and large, light, airy ones with impressive hall boys and high rents. How the simple things that belonged to the very birds of the air were valued in New York—space, view, cleanliness. All these so beyond the ordinary purse. All I wanted was a spacious apartment with many windows that looked on to green trees. The nearest I came to this was a flat with seven rooms, beautifully furnished, with handsome Oriental rugs and an abundance of silver and china, all for the price of the rental alone; but this was $80, lower than it would have been but for the nearness of an elevated railroad over which trains went tearing every few minutes; but still too high for me.

It was the home of a retired army officer. The detail of getting the place rented was holding his wife in town. She was eager to close the matter and join her family in the country. She urged me to take it.

"Such excellent service in the neighbourhood," she added, praising the place. "Everything is brought right to your door."

But I told her it was too expensive. That evening at the M—— L—— I fell into talk with a young woman

whose large wistful gray eyes and down South voice and manner attracted me. Soon we were telling each other our troubles. She too, wanted a home for the summer, or such part of the summer as she would have to be in town. She was an actress, or at least wanting to be one. She had graduated from Frohman's school of dramatic art and was here to find a "part." Her family did not approve. Very evidently a society girl, tired of it, and determined on a career.

But you didn't have to feel sorry for Margaret, some way—only interested and sympathetic. She was small and ethereal, and she looked something like Maude Adams. Day after day she had been going about to the agents' offices, trying to land something. It was plain that she had no home problem, or if there was one in her case, she was it—wanting to go on the stage instead of comfortably marrying some suitable man and entering on a long-continued story of bridge, and dancing, and teas. "And after a while—just bridge and teas," she added wearily; "and matching off *my* daughters to eligible men!" She hadn't been willing to take the time to find a suitable home, but she must soon, as one could stay at the M—— L—— but two weeks.

I told her of my find, the Colonel's home; but it was too large and too expensive. While we were talking, I was called to the 'phone. It was the Colonel's wife. She said I could have the apartment for $30, if I would take it off her hands immediately. She simply must get away, and she didn't want to leave the place shut up all summer.

I agreed to take it, and turning back to Margaret, I had an idea: "Come and share it with me," I said.

She was delighted to do so. We moved in the next morning; and so, on the third day after I arrived in New York, I had a home and a friend.

CHAPTER XXXIII

It seemed to me that the new home was to be paradise: everything was so lovely, and Margaret was so very companionable. She would be away all day and not interfere with my work in the very least. In the evening, when I wanted company, she would be there. It was a happy arrangement for her, too. We hugged each other in our joy, and danced all around the nice big rooms.

But I had hardly got my trunk unpacked and my typewriter in its place in the Colonel's study, with a stack of white paper beside it, and erasers, pencils, cleaning fluid, and everything ready for long hours of uninterrupted work, when the dumb-waiter bell rang.

I sprang up from my desk and hurried to the kitchen, to have done with the matter quickly. Peering down the twelve-story chute, I saw a big, round, moon face, and was informed that this was my ice man.

The ice came up, I sent the change down, and dashed back to my desk just as the telephone rang. It was a friend of the Colonel's family, who couldn't be convinced all in one sentence that the Colonel's family was really away. *All gone?* Yes, *all* gone. For the summer? For the summer. For the *whole* summer? Yes, for the *whole* summer. They wouldn't be back till autumn?

No, not till autumn. I was *quite* sure? Yes, I was *quite* sure. Oh, dang it all, I thought, why can't people be drilled in advertisement writing; then they'd practise economy in the use of words! Back at the desk again—but again that dumb waiter! I disregarded it for some minutes, dashed once more out to the kitchen and demanded furiously down that long chute what was wanted—only to be patiently informed by the janitor that he was waiting for my garbage. I sent it down, and in a few minutes there was another ring; he was returning the can.

I took the hood off my machine, inserted a sheet of paper, when I was again called to the kitchen.

"What do you want?" I screamed down the chute.

"I'm your ice man," bawled up another moon-face.

"I already have my ice," I told him.

"But that was the wrong man; *I'm* your ice man!"

"But he said *he* was my ice man!"

"But he ain't; I been your ice man all the time."

"Well, I've got my ice now, and that's settled."

"But you must take ice from *me;* always, I been your ice man."

"But he said *he'd* always been my ice man!"

"Just *me"*—slapping his chest furiously—*"me* your ice man. He say he your ice man, he lies! He lies! He lies! He lies! He lies!"

"All right, all right, *all right,* you bring ice to-morrow."

But "to-morrow" it was the same thing all over again. Still another big, round, moon-faced man shouted up the chute, swearing by all the gods that *he* was my ice man, had always been my ice man, would

always be my ice man. . . . I tried doing without ice; but butter became oil, and cream clabber. I went back to ice, and suffered.

It was the same with the grocers and meat men. All round, up-turned, perspiring faces looked alike, seen down that twelve-story chute; and they all insisted that they had been serving me regularly for years past, and never no complaint, and now why had I changed? I tried to explain that I was new, but they couldn't or wouldn't accept it. So I ordered something from each one to close his mouth and get back to my work; only to be called again to the dumb waiter to take off the things I had ordered and didn't in the least want.

I was not a writer; I was an attendant on bells. If only there was some way to get rid of the "service" that made life so easy in a flat!

To add to the difficulties, Margaret had the worst fault she could have drawn out of the whole fault grab-bag. She adored bargains; she simply could not resist them. Her ethereal look, I found, came largely from going without suitable food that she might use her food money on bargains. She had an allowance, but, as her family wanted her to become tired and discouraged as quickly as possible, they made it barely sufficient to maintain existence. But instead of spending it for lamb chops and new peas, she would eat a doughnut, then race off to the bargain counters. She bought hats, and flowers, and ribbons, and ornaments, and even goods by the yard, for all of which she had no possible use. I had to admit that the bargains were tempting. After going the rounds with her once, I could

only resist by staying away. Everything in the world seemed on sale at greatly reduced prices.

One day there was a special sale of hats: leghorns, and milans, and straws, and panamas; and Margaret sent home boxes and boxes. All her closet shelves were filled.

"But, Margaret," I cried, aghast, when she began opening up the boxes that evening and showing me her treasures, "they're all such terribly old style!"

"Look at that Paris milan," she said, disregarding my remark, "worth every cent of thirty dollars—and I got it for *twenty-five cents.*"

"But look at the *shape!* People haven't worn those great wide brims and tiny crowns in *years.* Whatever can you do with it?"

"I'll no doubt have a 'part' some day that will call for just that hat," she said loftily.

No matter what she wasted money on, her excuse was always the same—she'd need it sometime for a "part." There was no going beyond that defence. I finally grew serious; told her that I positively meant it; I would not be bothered answering the door bell to take in her parcels. After that there was only one more such annoyance. This time it was three bolts of linen lawn, cross-barred with heavy black lines, making a large, bold plaid.

"Margaret!" I demanded that evening, "What in the world can you do with all that stuff? Get a ghost's part and use it for a winding sheet?"

She grew lofty—held her head very high. "We can make nightgowns of it," she said, including me in the affair.

"When?"

She abandoned the idea of making me see ourselves as seamstresses for the rest of the summer, and went on to tell me how she got the whole lot for ten dollars—a perfectly marvellous bargain. Only, of course, the bars were too large—she couldn't have it made up into dresses, she being so tiny, and she did need some hot weather dresses so badly. . . .

She looked so very little and wistful over her need of dresses that I finally took one of the bolts off her hands and got the janitor's wife to take another; and we actually did make the wiry, scratchy stuff up into nightgowns, sewing at odd times, by hand.

And then mice broke out! So many apartments were empty, with people away for the summer, that the mice that ordinarily would have distributed themselves among many tenants filed straight to us, where there was food. We shut up everything in tight containers, and we set traps. When I had removed thirteen from traps—and one from my hair, waking 'way in the night with the horrible sensation of tiny feet all tangled up in long strands—I said, "Now, Margaret, it's your turn. I won't remove another mouse from a trap. As for my hair, I'll sleep in a bathing cap!"

Margaret turned pale: "I never could do it," she said tragically.

"Oh, you might have a 'part' some day that calls for taking a mouse out of a trap," I said. "Better learn the technique while you have the chance."

She looked at me from lofty heights, as lofty as five feet could muster, with the help of a very aristocratic little nose—then marched straight to the telephone and

called up a rat man. Funny, I hadn't thought of a rat man, but I became acquainted with one; also a roach man, and an ant man, and a mosquito man, and a bug man. They all came, offering their services, refusing to be turned away.

CHAPTER XXXIV

I was desperate with all the interruptions. I told Margaret at last it was no use; I simply could not write in New York; I'd have to leave town. But Margaret lined up argument after argument to prove that I could—I had only to get used to it. She said I'd find after a while that I worked all the better for the interruptions; that they stimulated thought. She insisted that she knew very many writers who had worked nearly a lifetime with just one dream—to get a home in the country where they could work in quiet among the katydids; and then, when they finally managed it, found they couldn't work at all. They kept waiting for a bell to ring, or the postman to come, so they could get started; and, finally, they'd just had to get up and leave their families in the country with the katydids and come back to town, to a noisy, crowded neighbourhood, where something was happening all the time. She was good at argument, that little Margaret.

In the long evenings, wearing the cross-barred gowns we'd made, in an attempt to keep cool, we'd sit between the windows in the dark, talking about our families that we'd run away from, but had really carried right along with us, and letting the wonders of America's greatest city go all unexplored. It was too hot for exploration. And, anyway, we were too intense in our own lives to be very keen about sightseeing or shows and concerts.

Margaret let me more deeply into her own problem. Everybody in the world I find, has a problem, and you don't have to be with anyone very long to know about it. Hers was the conventional life of Washington into which she had been born, and her desire to escape it. "The girls there live on the most terrific strain," she said, "just to land a suitable husband. You'll see them out in the evening so beautifully gowned, at balls and dinners and receptions, but if you run into their homes the next morning, you'll find the laundry drying on the bathtub. Live anyway, do anything, just to achieve that public appearance. I hate it! I hate its atmosphere! Not that we had to do those things, but I hate being marketed, and I won't!"

"But you're working just as hard, and doing without as many other sorts of comforts, to get off in another market."

"It's different!" Margaret stamped her cunning little foot at this, but quickly drew it back. She had brought home a perfectly wonderful "bargain," a pair of exquisitely made slippers; only one wouldn't quite go on. She said when I called her attention to this defect, that she could wear them in the house, evenings, and keep that foot back. "Many times your foot cramps, and you halfway slip it out of a shoe," she said. She went on now to explain that the theatrical market was an *open* one, and you were right out with what you were trying to do; there wasn't any pretence about it. But she was certainly being let into a new side of life —rather a seamy side, but always interesting. Weird characters came to the agents' offices seeking "parts," sitting out long hours, hoping. There was a lanky, flat-

chested girl with big black hoops in her ears, who discoursed on her "drag" for men, looking at little Margaret as much as to say, "Be glad you're only a simple little thing." And another, a towering Amazon, in plumes, who pulled a tiny girl child around with her. She too talked condescendingly with Margaret and confided to her that there was a place around the corner, in the alley, where you could get a glass of buttermilk and a doughnut for five cents. Information Margaret would have been better without.

They all discussed everything freely, including the road companies being cast, and the "parts" they wanted. In this way Margaret got all the gossip. She had heard of a "little mother" part that she was eager to play. She believed she was the right type, if only the manager would look at her! She dressed daily for it in a simple semi-matronly gray silk and a bonnety sort of a gray hat with pink rosebuds. It was in style, but tuned to the "little mother" idea, demure and modest. She would accept anything, but she dreamed of this.

New York continued to seem un-American to me. I felt it in the service people, just as I had felt it the first day in conductors and policemen. In Chicago you had the impression that the taxi drivers, elevator boys, waiters, delivery men—all the people who made up the machinery of a great city's organization—had been "hired hands" once, or sons of dads with good farms, who had come to town for a change, polished up the surface a little, and taken over the jobs. But scratch ever so lightly and you would find a genuine American under the veneer, without a particle of kowtow in his

nature. In New York, on the other hand, you felt that the service people were descendants of service people, with servility in their very bones.

This feeling about the town's un-American nature began to colour my attitude toward the editors. Before coming, I had intended to call on a number of them and find out what they wanted, get in touch with magazine needs at headquarters. It was their business to publish, it was my business to write; why shouldn't we meet and talk the thing over? Undoubtedly they could give me suggestions that would help me to understand their aims and policies, and maybe meet them. I still intended to write only what I felt impelled to write, but I hoped to find the correct channel for its presentation, so as to stop that eternal flow of rejected manuscripts. I didn't expect to continue as fortunate as I had been with the *Delineator* without considerable study of the situation.

But now I shrank from meeting editors. They might glare, or growl, or look superior and lofty and unhumân. In Chicago, I had felt that all writers and publishers and editors were my friends; the very fact of their profession made a kinship. I loved them to start with, just because they *were* in the writing game. It was all one grand fraternity. My first publisher being so very kind and dear, and my first editor being so humanly helpful, had given me a slant all their way. I would have gone to any editor person if in trouble, just as a man turns to a fellow lodge member. But now, some way, I began to wonder if New York editors wouldn't be formidable too, like the head waiters and hall boys.

And the worse the writing went, the more I shrank

from contacts. There's something in the strong, full sweep of creation that gives assurance. When you are once lost in a piece of work, nothing pertaining to the routine of everyday life impresses you. The president is waiting for a conference? Oh, very well, let him wait. But when the thing wouldn't sweep, just wouldn't go, wouldn't even start—oh, then, the humility! The janitor wants you on a garbage matter? Certainly, you will be right there.

While in this sort of a mental deadlock, I received an invitation to a reception at the Butterick Building, which housed a considerable group of magazines, including the *Delineator, Everybody's* and *Adventure.* The invitation had been sent to my Western address, and was forwarded to me. The publication offices had been newly decorated by Tiffany, and this was made the occasion for an editorial party.

I would go, not meet anyone—for hundreds would be there, and I'd never be seen—but just slip in quietly and take a look at New York editors. Maybe this would start the wheels moving in my head.

CHAPTER XXXV

The building was familiar—it had been pictured always in the old days on the cover of the *Delineator* that had been in our home from earliest memory, Mamma planning her little girls' dresses from its pages—but I was repelled by the foreignness of the streets: messy, dirty, crowded, with shawled women going about, talking everything but English, and babies rolling in the dirt. You felt like lifting your skirts and going through on your toes, with your nose well in the air to escape odours. The foreign element had rolled up like a wave and broken against the old building.

But people were thronging in, being carried up many stories in the busy elevators. I melted into a group and was shot up, and out, into a large, beautiful reception room. The lighting was soft and dim, the decorations in exquisite jewel tints, and people were everywhere, all talking at once, with waiters hurrying about bearing trays filled with drinks and ices. It was terribly hot.

How alike people were, I thought: make them hot and uncomfortable and you got the same reaction—a red face and a moist look. I imagined them all in bathing suits on a cool beach, imagined the different state of mind. But, even so, there was a difference, and personalities began to creep out: some were frumpy, and some were fashionable, and some were distinguished looking, and some were flat and colourless.

And then a young woman was asking me if I would have some tea . . . tea! Go off to a corner somewhere with a merely pretty girl in a dainty white dress and a red rose in her hair and have tea! When here were editors! But she was waiting, smiling graciously, wanting to be nice; one of the daughters, no doubt; daughters were always helping at the affairs given by the old Press Club. So, regretfully, I went with her, trying at the same time to decide which of those perspiring, red-faced, hosty sort of men was Theodore Dreiser, and which was Mr. Edward Bok—he might be there, everyone was supposed to be there—and which——

"Sugar and lemon, or cream?"

"Sugar—lemon—cream—all—oh, none of them!" How could it matter?

"Sandwich?" Another pretty girl was smiling above a plateful of food. Absently I took a sandwich. That very tall man—could he be——

"Is that Mr. Dreiser?" I asked the black-eyed girl who had dragged me away.

"No; did you want to meet Mr. Dreiser?"

"Goodness, no; I only wanted to *look* at him!"

"Anyone else?"

I hastily assured her to the contrary.

"Can't I get you an ice?"

It was annoying: food, always food. I scarcely answered.

"Cake?"

I came out of it and gave attention.

"Do you know, I didn't get your name," she said.

I gave it to her.

"Not Anne Shannon Monroe?"

She spoke in a tone of astonishment.

"Yes."

"Well!" she exploded in surprise. "I'm Mary Curtis—I've edited all your stuff."

"Mary Curtis!" It was my time to stare. Just a pretty black-eyed girl with a red rose in her hair. And assistant editor! We both laughed—each of us had formed a mental picture of the other that was so very different. I had had her down for a drab, picky person, in great horn-rimmed glasses; she had thought I was an old lady.

"Come, now," she said presently, when she had heard all about my being in New York, "you must meet Mr. Dreiser, and Mr. Cosgrave—he's editor now of *Everybody's*—and Mr. Hoffman—he's the man that made *Adventure*. We'll have to rout him out of some hiding place, for he hates things like this; but he likes to meet writers, individually. We had no idea you were in town."

We found Mr. Dreiser in his office, where he had been having a quiet confab with some contributor: a big man, big-boned, fair-haired, and clumsy looking; the kind whose mother, when he was a little boy, must have been forever saying, "Now watch where you're going, and *don't* spill things!"

Mary introduced me, and he immediately began to fold and unfold that famous handkerchief of his; I wondered if it was a sort of secret code of his own, a way of taking impressions. But he kept it up, and said: "Honest? Anne Shannon Monroe? I supposed she was a grandmother. Where did you learn to write so *old?*"

It was just as I thought. It was better for my work for me not to be seen. I wasn't, some way, the regular thing. But neither was he. So bulky, somehow. So *inquiring* about life. He made me think of a question mark—a big, clumsy, rough-hewn question mark jotted down on the earth. As though he'd face the Creator with a childlike honesty and demand, "Well, what *is* it all about, anyhow?" He told me to come back when there wasn't such a crowd. Mary explained as we went away that he was from the Middle West, and only temporarily editing the magazine. He wanted to get on with his novels.

And then I met Mr. John O'Hara Cosgrave, editor of *Everybody's,* another very tall, very imposing sort of a man, as fair as Mr. Dreiser but better looking. He was from Australia. He told me to come again soon for a talk over work. This crowd—he seemed worn out with the jam and the heat.

Then I met Mr. Arthur Sullivant Hoffman, who created *Adventure,* also very tall and very fair. Vikings, these men, who were directing our reading matter; but in spite of his fine physique, Mr. Hoffman had a poetic look, the look of an idealist, a dreamer—all of him not there in that choky room, but off somewhere fishing or something, where it was cool and shady, and where green banks made shadows in still water. He was the only near Easterner of them all, I found, this editor of a magazine of far Western tales of adventure. He had never seen the far West.

I couldn't help wondering about all those big blond men, wondering if they weren't all Gullivers, tied with packthreads. If that wasn't the reason they all seemed

so tired, even defeated, in a way; as if they weren't doing what as boys they'd dreamed of doing. I wondered if they weren't bucking their own natures, doing one thing while wanting to do something else. Maybe they had books in them, and they must edit other people's books. Maybe they lived in modern apartments, with service. Maybe they were merely overcome with meeting so many people on such a hot day. I didn't know, of course, but I wasn't in awe of them any more: I'd seen them humanly tired, and bored, just like other mortals.

I met a number of awfully nice young women, some of them writers, some assistant editors, some wives of writing men. And ever so many invited me to their homes, to teas and receptions and little studio parties down in Gramercy Park and Washington Square, giving me cards with dates and addresses on them.

I went home happy as a lark. I'd seen over into the promised land, and I wasn't afraid any more. New York editors were *not* lofty and grand; just human—and, anyway, they weren't *New York* editors; they were editors from everywhere who had come to New York. I would work now—how I would work!

CHAPTER XXXVI

I got up the next morning, early, and settled down to it, an idea booming in my head. That was the morning a fire broke out in the next block, and Margaret and I rushed to a window and hung over the casement until we made sure it wasn't coming to lap us up. Margaret was all for running into the street with the first alarm, she with her "parts," I with my manuscripts. But at last that trouble disappeared in smoke and noise, and I settled down once more to my desk.

Then the daily programme began. I tried to hold my story in my mind while I answered the garbage man, the ice man, the grocery man, the milk man, the laundry man, and the window washer. But I was so far reduced to pulp when the little Italian window washer came—a totally unexpected addition to the very excellent "service"—that I listened in detail to the story of his window washing. He chose it because it was an outdoor job, windows being half in and half out, and he was tubercular. But he had a fine little boy, oh, such a wonderful little boy, who was studying to be a violinist. Great talent the little boy had, but, oh, it took so many windows at fifteen cents a window to pay for the so very expensive lessons, even though he did get them at half price because of the boy's great gift. All in broken English with many gestures, and much

shrugging, and a cough now and then, as he wrung out his wet rags.

Of course, I had to let him wash *all* the windows, including those in my study, thereby further interfering with work, for how else could the violin lessons be paid for? And he was such a weak little papa.

Even at that, I might not have become utterly desperate but for the burglar. That very night he broke into the apartment house across the narrow court, not eight feet from our fire escape. Margaret and I were sitting there in the dark, as usual, deep in our two subjects, her "part" and my stories. Road companies were being cast with more "little mother" parts, and she was beside herself with eagerness to be cast for one. We were deep, too, in my stories and my plans to quell disturbances so I could get down to work, when suddenly Margaret went stony still and rigid from her aristocratic little nose right down through her chin to her neck and spine, her gaze fixed on something she was seeing.

Slowly, like a ghost, she raised her finger and put it to her lips—then turned that finger and pointed out the window.

I wasn't sure but what it was a "part" that she was trying out on me, but anyway I risked being laughed at, and turned my head. It was no "part," but a huge bulk of a man completely filling the window of the apartment directly opposite. He was going in from the fire escape, cautiously, stealthily, his back to us—the apartment in darkness—all with the deadly skill of a professional.

Margaret and I communicated with each other via

finger on lip, and slipping to the floor, crept noiselessly to the window sill and watched. There was no doubt about it, this was a bona fide burglar. The same thought was in both our minds: we must not startle him, for it was a chance in a lifetime to study the technique of a burglar in action. Margaret might have a burglar "part" some time; I might want to write about one.

The immorality of not immediately sounding the alarm would undoubtedly have occurred to us presently, only, as he was halfway in, the householder, who had probably been resting in the dark as had we to lessen the heat, burst suddenly into the room and switched on the light: a funny little bow-legged man in a nightshirt, frantic with fear. Seeing the huge bulk of burglar, he screamed in a shrill, trembling falsetto:

"Get out of here! Get out of here! I'll *kill* you if you don't! I'll kill you! I'll kill you! I'll kill you!"

Just then in came his wife, big and fat, also in her night clothes. Instantly he jumped in front of her and swung his arms about, for all the world like a furiously distracted farmer shoo-ing out chickens. We had to giggle. . . . For we couldn't see what he was going to kill the burglar with, though afterward Margaret swore he had a long curved knife in his hand, such as people put on walls in "dens" to make them look fierce and masculine. Maybe he did, but I didn't see it. Anyway, the burglar now began to back out again, only he was so huge, with nothing between him and a twelve-story drop but that small fire-escape shelf, so he had to move very cautiously.

And now the entire court was alive, proving that many people sat in darkness. Lights were flared on

everywhere, and heads stuck out of windows, and necks twisted, and faces turned up, all wanting to see.

Someone must have notified the police, for when we finally got to our 'phone the hall boy said, Yes, he knew about the burglar, and the police were on the way.

Back we rushed to the window, not wanting to miss any of it. The burglar was now on the narrow ladder, undecided, apparently, whether to go up or down. Seeing all those faces below may have decided him, for he went up, steadily, cautiously, never hurrying. We craned far out and watched him make the roof, pull up over the ledge, run along it, then disappear. We dropped back disappointed. But we must know more. So we threw on some clothes and ran to the elevator, rang and rang, but it was useless. The elevator boy was evidently also following the burglar. The man was so gentlemanly, so well dressed; once in a group of people, no one would suspect him of being a burglar.

Did they get him? we wondered, coming back to our window. Did they get him? we wondered all night, for we didn't sleep. It was no more comfortable to go off to sleep with a burglar loose all over the place than with a mouse loose.

CHAPTER XXXVII

Heavy-eyed, next morning, I sat down to my breakfast of tea and toast. Margaret came, sleepily, with her bottle of milk from the ice box, holding up her gown of barred linen like some little girl out of a picture. But I was in no mood for pictures.

"Margaret, I'm going," I said, in deadly earnest.

"Where?" she wailed.

"I don't know; but somewhere in this land of Pilgrims and Rips there must be a quiet spot, and I'm going to find it."

"Give up the apartment?"

"Give it up? Don't be funny! When have I ever had it? I took it inhabited, and the inhabitants can go on inhabiting. But I'm clearing out! The garbage man, and the ice man, and the grocery man, and the rat man, and the roach man, and the bug man, and the window cleaner, and the fires and burglars can all get along just as well without me. I'm quitting, I tell you!"

She looked at me reproachfully.

"Oh, I'll pay my share of the rent; you can stay."

She sat down. "No, not alone," she said, actually pale over it. "I'll have to get a 'part' to-day, that's all."

She said it as though for some hidden reason she had been holding back all this time, but when necessary, the thing could be done. It became interesting.

"Yes, I'll get a 'part.' " And after a few moments, "Where are you going?"

"Some place that's dead; that summer people avoid like a pestilence. Summer is almost over, anyway. Some old deserted resort, maybe. There must be a place somewhere where cows low, and bees buzz, and birds sing, and farmers chew tobacco at their leisure. Isn't there such a place? Books tell about them. Writers like Alice Brown and Mary E. Wilkins Freeman."

"Sleepy Hollow, maybe."

"Sleepy Hollow—that sounds just right. Very well, then, I'll be on a Hudson River boat to-morrow bound for Sleepy Hollow, or some other place in the Catskills, and you will be—where?"

"I'll get a 'part,' " repeated Margaret, like a sleep-walker.

The queer thing is that she did. I was all packed that night when she came home. The main thing was my typewriter. I used a big, old-fashioned Smith-Premier that I had brought from Chicago with me. My system was to wrap it first in newspapers, then, beginning with my underwear, go through my everyday dresses, then the others, wrapping them round and round it. When it had gathered size, like a huge snowball, I placed it gently in the very centre of the trunk, the tray having been discarded; and all about it I packed everything else that was to go. . . . The typewriter always got through without injury.

But Margaret's "part." It was almost uncanny the way it happened. She had called at the office where the road companies were being cast for the play with the "little mother" part that she had been craving right

along, and seated herself, as usual, among the vamps and ingénues and character ladies, and had listened, as usual, to their talk of "parts" and tips, and was growing wearier and wearier every minute, what with the heat, and the burglar the night before, and the fact that she had eaten no breakfast in her abstraction over our break-up, when here booms in the big Amazon dragging the little girl along.

The child's lip was puckered up, and she was ready to cry, with her mother snatching at her little arm every minute, and ordering her to straighten up her face, and if she did, pretty soon she would have her lunch, and here was a stick of candy, and maybe that would hold her for a while. Then, seeing Margaret, the mother swooped down on her.

"Say," she bawled out, "can I leave the kid with you while I take a run over to S and S's? I hear they've got a part just my type, but if I take the kid along, she'll queer me."

Well, of course, Margaret was willing, for she felt so sorry for the poor little messy thing, all fussily got up; and when the mother was out of sight, she wet her handkerchief at the cooler, and gathered the baby into her arms, took off her hat and washed her hot little face and hands, and was smoothing back her curls with her own side comb, and singing to her sort of low, comforting her, when a big bulgy manager broke into the room from his private office.

He shot a glance around the place, raged over to little Margaret, stopped suddenly before her like a bull about to paw the earth, and bellowed:

"Child act?"

"Oh, yes," said Margaret calmly.

"C'm' in."

She went in.

"Know anything about the 'little mother' part?"

Know anything about it? She might have invented it. She had satisfied him on that score. And now here she was with a contract in her hand. She showed it to me.

"But, Margaret," I gasped, "what about the child? You surely haven't kidnapped it?"

"Oh, that's a detail," said Margaret, her chin in the air. "You can always find a child—rent one. No doubt this mother will let me have hers. I haven't asked her yet."

Margaret was in her seventh heaven. As for me, the next morning I was on a boat going up the Hudson River. Where, I didn't know, but away from everything.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

The Hudson didn't impress me as being nearly as beautiful as the Columbia, for the palisades were mere fairy ones compared with the peaks and pinnacles of our Northwestern river. To one whose early youth has known the Columbia, perhaps there can never be another truly lordly river. When we finally got past all the velvet lawns of country homes and the beautiful grounds surrounding West Point, and began to enter a region less well manicured, I took fresh hope. And when we came to a landing quite unkempt and deserted, I got off the boat.

I found there a little railroad that led back into the mountains; and I found a little town tucked away in the little mountains; and a shabby rambling old hotel with an obliging clerk. A quiet spot? Sure! He knew just the place. He called the manager on the 'phone. Yes, they had a vacancy. "You'll like the food," he told me, and telephoned for a rig to take me out. It was a matter of two or three miles.

It was a large, ungainly old house, but substantial, and set on a hilltop overlooking the soft little green valley. There was something very melting about the valley, and sweet. It looked livable and lived in. Nothing austere. But the house was austere, and so was my room, wide and high-ceilinged and prim. The landlord

was French and the guests Holland Dutch from Brooklyn. They had been coming to that very house for forty years and more, and considered it wholly theirs, which, of course, it was. Though no English was spoken, I could see that I was considered a rank outsider. Only, I gathered, because the season was closing and the regular guests leaving every day had the Frenchman consented to take me in.

One thing of dramatic interest had just happened among the big fat burghers and their roly-poly wives. One wife had slipped and fallen on the stairs, and rolled all the way down. This was tragedy. Food for talk. Gossip. A doctor had been called, the good lady put to bed, with bruises, I gathered from the exictement and the gestures and ejaculations.

Each meal there were elaborate inquiries and discussions. She was a very lovable lady—this got over to me. Kind and generous, always doing good deeds. It was as if they were already writing her epitaph. And there was a daughter, a scrawny, lean, fighty daughter who had never married but stayed by the old people. She was now the centre of interest, giving out bulletins. Each meal she would come to the table, all nervous and keyed up, and someone would immediately ask after her dear mamma, and she would immediately burst into tears and not be able to eat a bite—no, not a single bite!—it was all so dreadful, so dreadful.

Then her father would try to restore her with wine; but she wouldn't take a drop—no, not a drop; not a morsel should pass her lips while poor dear mamma suffered so; and didn't she take it out on poor Papa

though! Papa, who was there to eat, and had no intention of losing a meal over Mamma's bruises, sorry as he was about them, and willing to pay for every possible aid to their erasure.

Each meal it was the same programme: "And you can eat!" She would even break into English over it. "And poor dear Mamma suffering so!" She would fight him steadily through all the courses, having finally to leave the table, swamped in tears. But Papa ate right on—big heavy Papa who would really have been so much better to have been affected in his appetite by Mamma's sufferings.

And then, in a few days, Mamma was down again, with daughter master of the situation, telling her what to eat, where to step, how long she could stay, how much she could talk, and when she must go to bed again. I never saw such tyranny—and drama. Starved for drama in her own life, demanding it from the lives of her parents. I wanted to whisper in that big burgher papa's ear, "Get her a husband."

But the meals were perfect. I owed that to the Brooklyn-Hollander-Americans; they demanded catering. And the situation was perfect for work: not a sound all the morning but nature sounds, or the occasional laugh of a child, or the deep rumble and roar from some amused old burgher. I wrote each day until noon, then after lunch tramped over the pretty soft little hills. The little town, I found, was filled with equally well-fed Jewish people who sat on verandas and played pinochle all the afternoon.

But two weeks of stony stares and steady ignoring

finished me; and the story was all blocked out. The work had come fluently, as in the days when I wrote my first book in the deep woods of Washington. I now felt restless, pined for the English tongue and something purely American.

CHAPTER XXXIX

One day, in running through the classified ads of a New York newspaper, I saw an advertisement of a boarding house near Mark Twain's last home, Stormfield, in Connecticut. It answered something of homesickness in me. Mark Twain, most American of all Americans—a boarding house in his neighbourhood might have a truly American atmosphere. Anyway, I should hear English. Mamma had always dearly loved Mark Twain, and had known the originals of many of his characters in Missouri. They were household names with us. So I wrote the Mark Twain people to expect me, once more packed my trunk, and was soon on the boat, returning to New York. An hour's travel into Connecticut, and I stopped at West Redding. My latest landlady was there with a one-horse buggy; she was wiry and thin and worky looking. The horse was baulky.

But we finally reached the farmhouse, and I was delighted with it: an old pre-Revolutionary house that sprawled along a strip of lovely roadway. At least, part of the house was pre-Revolutionary, the core, you might say. It had deep old-fashioned fireplaces with cranes and kettles, though the wife, who was feeling prosperous from summer boarders, was planning to wall them all up, and put in little tinny grates and mantels. Wings had been added to the old house

through the generations, but the property had never left the descendants of the original owners. The husband was tall and thin with long white whiskers, also quite deaf, and he had been fully twenty years longer on earth than his wife. There had been, I soon learned, two great events in his life: he had fought through the Civil War, and once, long ago, he had gone West into the forests of Michigan and there had felled great trees.

Tremulously, when he found I came from "the West," he wanted to know if the old forests were just the same? He had always meant to go back, he said, but he never had; had never got off the farm again.

I hadn't the heart to tell him that there were no forests left in Michigan, as in his day, that they had mostly been cut up into lumber; because he loved them too well, loved to picture them. And so we talked of the forests of the Northwest, each remembering a thing to add, the spicy fragrance after a rain, the wood rats and the things they packed away, the fires, the way a great tree sounded when it fell—like some giant shudderingly returned to earth—he having in mind his forests, and I mine, and we were reminiscent and happy.

My room was large and filled with old-fashioned furniture—a highboy of mahogany, a four-poster bed; and I had hand-woven sheets. The wife had her spinning room and still used it occasionally. I saw at once that we should clash. She worshipped a house—wanted all the windows hermetically sealed to keep out the dust and the night air. I worshipped the out of doors—wanted the windows open wide to let in the breezes and

whatever they had captured of fragrance in their merry chase across the meadows. She was intent on three subjects: dust, work, and her husband. The dust and the work she could generally manage; but the husband was a problem, for he cared for little now in his closing years but to sit on the porch and smoke and dream. His working days were over, but she would not concede this. She worked and he must work. Work was her god—that she might get money in the bank. This was her most absorbing passion—to get money in the bank. That was riches—to have money out at interest. It gave security, and standing in the community. Everybody was judged by the money he had. She never read, she never discussed any subject of world interest, she never recognized any existence outside of her daily routine. She just worked.

There were no other boarders, the summer being over.

The first morning, I ran happily down the stairs and called out Hello to everybody. The morning was divine—a new, fresh-washed, dewy feeling in the air, with fragrances from roadside grapes and ripening nuts and drying corn husks. The night had been noiseless, and here were Americans back to the *Mayflower!* But instantly I perceived that I had smashed some code. My new landlady looked at me most disapprovingly. My place as a boarder was in the parlour sitting on one of the stiff haircloth chairs, or on the front porch, sedately rocking. Other boarders rocked, why couldn't I? She didn't want anyone running freely into the kitchen—making unnecessary remarks.

But though I felt her disapproval, I couldn't help

pausing in the doorway, for there sat the old man in his shirt sleeves, in a split-bottom chair, with a deep stone jar of cream on the floor between his knees, beating it with a long-handled spoon. "What are you doing?" I asked.

"Butter," he managed the one word, thrusting his tobacco into the other cheek.

"Broke the churn?"

But his wife put in: "I'll not go spending good money on a churn when he's not got enough to do as it is to keep him busy. He can just churn that way the rest of his life."

I thought of the galleys and a long whip, lashing. Domesticity—how many false faces it wore. I ate breakfast in silence, then went outdoors to say good-morning to the day. There wasn't a thing wrong with the *day*. I loved the small cuddly hills all about. They sort of nested you, made you feel held close in loving arms. In comparison, our great old rugged ranges of the Northwest seemed cold and forbidding. These little hills made a livable country; they should make livable lives.

I went on to the garden—a sunken garden, with all the late vegetables doing nobly. The wife came presently carrying two great pails of water from the pond back of the house, the weight dragging at the cords in her neck.

"Goodness," I cried out, "let me help you!"

But she drew back—she didn't care for help. She distinctly wanted her boarder to keep her place. She proceeded to water the garden, with a dipper. I wondered why they didn't have a trough running from the

pond. Gravity would carry the water. I suggested it.

"We could even put in a wheel with tin cans on the paddles to lift the water," I went on enthusiastically. "Then make little irrigation ditches through the garden. I could do it, I know; and I'd love to work at it, afternoons."

But she stiffened: "I've watered my garden this way for forty years," she said, "and my mother before me, and her mother before her, and I guess it will have to do for my boarders, no matter *how* tony they are!"

I went upstairs and arranged my desk, deciding I'd better just stick to being a boarder.

The food wasn't so good. The Brooklyn Hollanders had it all over New England there. Pie for breakfast lay heavy on my stomach; and my landlady wouldn't brown the bread. She thought browning it made it common. I'd ask her to leave a small pan of rolls in the oven for me till it was crisp and brown, but she wouldn't do it. Her standard for her table must be kept up. She couldn't bear the slightest suggestion of change. She had done it thus and so all her days, and thus and so it would be done till the end of the chapter. So I had to endure the doughy gobs in my mouth, sending them on down for my poor stomach to take its turn on them as quickly as possible. Both the old people had "dyspepsia" and were continually taking medicine for "stomach complaint." I didn't wonder.

One night I asked her to make potato salad; I was so tired of fried potatoes. She did it, but afterward I had potato salad regularly for breakfast. Then I admitted one afternoon that I liked clam chowder, and

after that we had clam chowder for breakfast. There was no distinction in her mind as to meals. Food was food. If it was good food, it was as good at one meal as another. So I would have pie, and cake, and doughnuts, and potato salad, and clam chowder for breakfast, and corn-meal mush and cream for supper. It was dizzying. I felt all turned around, as if I were dining the moment I got up, and having breakfast when I was ready for bed. But I couldn't change conditions, so I adapted myself to them and managed to get along very well. She meant well, anyhow; she had a kind heart.

The work went swimmingly: all the morning I was at it; all the afternoon I tramped over old forgotten roads, abandoned and rutty and grown up with weeds: past tumble-down farmhouses, empty, with wells in the yard, and well sweeps and moss-covered buckets. All these old ruins of houses were attractive in design, with long sloping roofs and small front-door stoops—a much better type of architecture than had travelled westward. I wondered why the New Englanders who had gone West—and the West was settled largely by migrating New Englanders—hadn't reproduced these earlier types.

I rarely met anyone; no one walked, it seemed, but myself, especially down the old roads. Sometimes I met a lazy-looking horse and driver and buggy, just ambling along, sometimes a car, but mostly the vehicles stuck to the paved highways. I had the lonely roads to myself, and was grateful.

Stormfield drew me. I climbed the hill and sat on the steps of Mark Twain's Italian villa, and looked

off over the soft, hazy blue world that had met his gaze during his last years, and thought about him. The house was closed, the windows looking like blind eyes, with an occasional drape showing through, rotted by sun and time. I wondered about Mark Twain's thoughts as he looked on this same pleasant country, all bathed in greenness and blueness and softness. Sad thoughts, for tragedy had stalked, and then he was growing feeble, and he had never quite done it, had never quite written what he wanted to write. No matter how keenly he might have suffered from losses, this, I felt, was his keenest sorrow; the knowledge that he had not fully delivered his message; and now it was too late.

I felt this so intensely, sitting there, that he had known what he wanted to say during his stay on our earth, but he had never quite said it. This was his crown of sorrows.

I went back, day after day; the place drew me. One day, as I sat alone on the white stone steps, dreaming, a boy of eighteen or nineteen came around the house, saw me, and stopped. I spoke to him, and he came on and sat down, and we had a visit. He was the boy who had driven Mark Twain over the country roads in his one-horse buggy during his last years.

"Never would let the horse step on the grass or flowers, if he could help it," the boy said. "Wouldn't let anything be hurt, if he could help it." The boy evidently had loved him, and now revered and missed him. Something wonderfully sweet had come into his life with Mark Twain, something that now tugged at his heartstrings and brought him here at times to

think about it. The boy, and the lonesome hilltop, and the blind windows—all mourning Mark Twain.

The roadside trees were large and full of shade—maples and locusts and elms. And along the great highway were beautiful country homes. But I continued to seek the old roads that held memories, and came home each day around six o'clock, tired and dusty and happy.

I was beginning to find out something about this lonesomeness that frightened me a little. It was this, that I was going to have to live in it more and more, that I could do my best work only when I did live in it. And yet I loved people so! All people some, some people all the way through. Everywhere I went I found people to love, or to be merely interested in, like the Hollanders and my present host and hostess. And the truth was dawning on me that, when I really became interested in people, then pretty soon I loved them too. You found things to love, wistful things, little avenues into side lines of their natures that showed them, after all, only stumbling children, and some way disappointed, or straining after an ideal of some kind that you hadn't understood at first, or maybe suffering from some old hurt that, buried deep, came out in sourness and ugliness. There was a reason for everything. Each group, save the Hollanders who never took me in—but even they had a strong appeal for me—became my group; I somehow settled into their lives and became one with their problems and difficulties, and was soon having them for my own.

But this interfered with work, that is, if I let it absorb me too much. Work went better when I re-

mained aloof, let my mind go free of the little problems.

Wonderful thoughts would come as I tramped hour after hour over the old dead roads, along the singing streams, up the hills and down again. Wait, wait, I'd say, digging into a pocket for pencil and paper. Soon a scrap of paper was not enough—I was carrying an entire writing pad, and returning home with it filled.

Sometimes these thoughts had to do with the piece of work I was on, a fragment that completed a sentence, or a word wrong—and it would be like a splinter in a thumb till I could reach home and take it out. Again thoughts winged in far removed from immediate work—a vivid flash that gave fresh light, an epigram, a singing phrase. Sometimes entire chapters from books not even planned, conversations between characters who burst alive and real into my consciousness.

It was a glorious thing, but it was frightening, for it meant that for my work's sake I was going to have to give up people more and more. But it had its compensations, for when I was once well off in the loneliness, I would begin to feel even more companioned than when with people. People misunderstood sometimes, but your thoughts drove straight home. Little by little, everything came into tune. There was harmony, a roseate world of dreams and creations. But before I quite achieved this, I yearned for friends, family, someone near and dear.

Each evening, after supper, I would sit on the porch and watch the fireflies that I had so loved as a child in Missouri and was so glad to see again—we do not

have fireflies in the far Northwest—watch them turning their little lights on and off until the old man would ramble out with his pipe and begin to talk of the great trees he had once felled. And sometimes the old lady would come and sit nervously rocking, though never for long, as there was so much to do. And the whippoorwills would sing in their whip-lashing way, and the frogs in the pond would start up their croaking, and the crickets and katydids would join in and our lives would melt sweetly out into communion with these things and seem very simple and lovely.

CHAPTER XL

In the Catskills I had been blocking out an advertising story that I had in mind for *Everybody's*. When I had it revised and copied, I once more packed my trunk and returned to the city. I went first to the Butterick Building and left my story with Mr. Cosgrave's secretary, telling her I would call as soon as I was located. Mr. Cosgrave had said, in a talk I had had with him, that he would like something in the way of business fiction, and I felt confident that my advertising story would please him.

I now turned my mind to finding a home. My plan was to locate a little tucked-away nook somewhere *without service*. Positively, there must be no service. But New York was still very much of a maze to me, and I hadn't a ghost of an idea where to start looking.

An autumn crispness was in the air; the wind moaned around the great buildings. Suddenly I longed for Chicago, and the Press Club, and the humanness of a tobacco-filled old room, and the presence of dear old men not too neatly dressed, with ties awry, sometimes, and cigar ash falling down their coat fronts, and the rumble of billiard balls, and laughter, and a rich, kindly voice coming out of it all with "Hello, Yellow Kid." Would anybody ever again call me "Yellow Kid," or "Shanty," or "Shining Shore," or

any of the dear, foolish, meaningless names? Or grin when they saw me coming, as if I were some kind of a joke, but, as Louie had said, a joke they liked?

It wouldn't bear thinking about. I hurried down Fifth Avenue, tears dimming my eyes. The lonesome life—I was committed to it, for the work went better, and I was committed to the work, but it wasn't easy.

And then I saw a sign in a large Fifth Avenue millinery shop: "Every Hat $5," and thought of Margaret and smiled, and was so glad she was away on the road out of temptation's reach. And in memory of her—or maybe because I needed it—I went in and bought a hat, a happy, gold-coloured sports hat, and discarded the old one, and went on feeling better.

There's nothing like a new hat to cheer you up when you're down—if it's becoming.

I now turned off Fifth Avenue, meaning to go over to Keene's Chop House for lunch. One of his highly advertised English mutton chops seemed the right thing on this nippy day, following so much pallid food, especially as I needed all the bracing up possible.

But midway to Sixth Avenue I noticed an old-fashioned red brick residence, with the usual stoop in front, and beautiful white-enamelled doors, and a brass knocker. It was worn and old and shabby, but you could see it had once been the last word in elegance. At present there was a smelly restaurant in the basement, run by Greeks, a fur-remodelling establishment on the first floor, run by Austrians, and a tailor shop on the second, run by German Jews. These things were blatant in signs on the windows. But on the windows of the third floor there were no signs; and above a

doorbell, marked "out of order," was a small pencilled card that advertised an apartment for rent.

I decided to look at it, pulled open the door, and went in. The feeling of fur in the air halted me. However, there was a beautiful arched stairway with newel post and banister of mahogany. I went up the first flight. The stairs were kindly built, suggesting old-fashioned grace and leisure. I went on up the second flight. It would have been dark but for a skylight. I was now in a narrow hall into which opened three doors. The central one stood wide, with a screen across it. The room was evidently without ventilation save from the hallway—hence, the screen. And there was a fireplace; I caught a faint glow of light.

As I was wondering on which door to rap, if any, I heard a step like a girl's, and almost immediately a grizzled old head was thrust above the screen, an aged woman with an eager face. "Did you want something, honey?" she asked in a rich Southern voice, a woolly sort of voice with a break in it. There was something warming in it.

"I should like to see the apartment," I told her, and could not help smiling back, she was so *high-lifed,* some way.

"Just a minute," she said, and pushed the screen to one side, a gesture of hospitality.

I didn't go in, but I could see in. It was a sort of an attic room, stacked to the ceiling on one side with battered old trunks pasted over with stickers; opposite was an old army cot, covered with gray blankets; in the centre, before a low smouldering fire, was a rickety table and on it a loaf of stale-looking bread;

and everywhere were newspapers; stacks and stacks of newspapers. On the low, smothery fire, all smoke, in the cracked and broken and charred old fireplace coffee simmered in a blackened tin cup—you knew by the odour. And all the time I was taking in these weird details, the little slim old lady was busying about, first carefully putting down her clippings and weighting them so not one would be lost, then lifting the coffee off the fire and placing it beside the stale bread; and then, drawing the faded old Spanish shawl more closely about her shoulders—handling it, somehow, not as an old woman would, but as a young girl who instinctively does the simplest thing in a pleasing way—she turned to me.

"You know, honey," she said, "we've simply got to have a merchant marine. We can't maintain any sort of place in the world's commerce without it. And if we can't operate ships as cheaply as other nations, then we must just make up the deficit, that's all. I've been running over these editorials—— Oh, what was it you wanted, honey?"

"I'd like to see the apartment, if you don't mind. But I had never thought much about a merchant marine. Is it so important, truly?"

"Important! My dear girl, nothing is more so. Just read these editorials; the editors do pretty well, but I could give them better arguments. And you never heard anyone talk about our needing a merchant marine?"

"Not—passionately."

She stood there all unconscious of her background, in that junky room that looked like nothing I could

think of unless it was an old attic where you tossed things you never expected to use again but hated to throw away, talking excitedly about our need of a merchant marine. "I think I'll just let you take these clippings along," she said, handing them to me, "because, if you've never paid any attention——"

"But can't I see the apartment?" I asked.

"That's so, you wanted to see the apartment, didn't you? Well, put the clippings in your bag and come on."

She led the way down the hall to the door at the front. It opened into a large room, fully twenty feet across, with two deep windows that looked on to the street. I could see the vehicles passing on Fifth Avenue in one direction, and the elevated stairway on Sixth Avenue, in the other. The size of the room pleased me instantly. I simply could not exist in a tiny space. The walls were grimy, but under the grime was paint, not paper; they could be washed. The furniture was not bad—a good-sized desk, some rather interesting old chairs, a couch, a fireplace with a gas grate; and adjoining was a small bedroom, also with a large window.

"It isn't merely what the government would save by having its own merchant marine," she went on in her rich throaty voice, "but the dignity of having its own boats. There's a thing in prestige, and——"

"How much is it?"

"It wouldn't cost more than a few millions, and what's a million, more or less——"

"But the apartment?"

"The apartment? Yes, of course: why, honey, if I

could have forty-five dollars, that would help me out with my rent like everything. That is, if you can pay it; if you can't—what can you pay?"

I told her that forty-five dollars would be all right and that I would take it. It was all too evident that there was no "service." "And now, do you know of a good scrub woman?" I asked.

She did; a widow with little children, who did office floors nights and whatever she could find days. And if the government didn't get its own merchant marine . . .

I had the scrub woman there in an hour, and soap, and washing powders, and disinfectants—all the kinds the corner druggist recommended. The scrub woman was Scotch with a genius for cleaning. Soon the place was all soapy slathers from ceiling, to walls, to floor. The removal of the grime revealed the most exquisite decorations—a wall design of waxy white water lilies floating on cool blue water. The old lady remembered that it had been an artist's studio once, years ago. The floor, of dark oak, was in good condition, as the place had been rented mostly for a dancing studio, and so the floor had been kept in repair.

I had a wonderful time shopping for blue and ivory window hangings, to match the walls, and blue draperies for the couch, and furniture for the bedroom, which I completely refitted. In a week's time, I had a beautiful home, a quiet little nest tucked away in the midst of the busiest streets in the city, with everything as fresh and sweet as new-mown hay.

CHAPTER XLI

The old lady was in and out continually, watching the transformation with delighted surprise—when she saw it. Mostly she was lost in some act of Congress, or news from the British Parliament, or from Canada, or Australia, some place thousands of miles away and equally remote from her personal interests—if she had any. But she had been pleased with the forty-five dollars, and rather astonished at getting it. It seemed she had rented the studio often, but rarely collected the rental. Broken-down old, or aspiring young, actor folk had largely been her tenants, and dancing teachers. This had been her home for a quarter of a century. She had seen the building sink from being merely old-fashioned to complete shabbiness, then to foreign occupation. It was to be torn down soon to make way for a skyscraper, but her homing instinct made her cling to it as long as it had a roof.

Other things came to light. She had been an actress. her last part being with David Warfield in *The Auctioneer*—character work. Right now her only personal concern was about her burial money. She was trying to eke out enough from her small income to pay for a vault over in Brooklyn. This money she had stowed away in a crack in the plaster back of her mantel. She showed me where she kept it, so if she should die unexpectedly, some day . . .

Having nearly enough money put aside for her burial, and the apartment rented and the rental in her hands, gave her a fine feeling of security. Now she could do as she pleased, she said, with a delicious chuckle, be a real free lance—her lifelong ambition. The absurd thing was that she had in those trunks, I soon discovered, the most wonderful old costumes and laces and jewellery. Her diamonds alone would have provided her with many comforts. But nothing could induce her to part with any of her treasures. She said they were "heirlooms," and not to be sold. She had grown up on a sugar plantation in the Bahamas, the daughter of a wealthy planter, and though she had abandoned luxury for the stage, she had kept some of her family traditions. One was that it was important where and how you were buried, and the other was respect for heirlooms. She meant to pass her jewels on. To whom? I found she had favourites among the young actresses.

The meal I had interrupted was her regular one. Twists of paper in the fireplace for fuel, the tin cup of coffee set over it, the day-old bread. When the coffee boiled, she would lift it off, and dipping her dry twists of bread in it, would eat, and read her papers, her eyes shining over the news of the world.

She was quick and keen, up on everything, especially on the doings of women in their progress toward complete emancipation. She was a street speaker in every campaign on in the city, being always either for or against everything, and violently. She could take a crowd away from any other speaker in town, for her wit was sharp, and her come-back shrewd and good-

natured. She completely owned her audience. A rare play-body who had lost the road to old age.

In and out she went, telling me things, raising a laugh. She had had two husbands, had been divorced from both. "The trouble with husbands," she tossed it off, "is that they want too much waiting on." And yet here she was, "waiting on" all mankind, devoting herself to problems that could never bring the slightest return to her. "Both good men," she went on about the husbands. One she had had fifty years ago, an officer in the navy, English, dominating. She couldn't be dominated; she had finally left—had gone back to the stage. The other she acquired much later—a German, prosperous, social, always bringing friends home to dinner, always eating and drinking. Oh, those soups! And fowls! And the mutton—great shoulders, great legs—to be roasted! She got sick seeing him eat so much; the fatter he grew the more he ate. She especially got sick of the legs of mutton. They had come home so often, and come on the table so often, and been carved so often. Of all her detestations, a leg of mutton came first. Sick or well, with a cook or without one, home came that leg of mutton. It had come once too often. She had taken it out into the back yard and heaved it over the fence. Then she had left.

Yes, he got a divorce—had gone on prospering and eating mutton, she supposed. Had married again after a while. But she had known nothing of him now for ten years or more. The other? Yes, he had married again, too; had raised a nice family, a very happy family, she understood. Yes, good men, both of them. "But husbands want too much waiting on."

She was to celebrate her seventy-seventh birthday soon, and she had hoped all along to go to a grand ball and dance till daylight. But she couldn't manage it without breaking into her burial money, and of course she mustn't do that.

I was to have the use of the kitchen, too, and had to do some fixing up there to make it livable. The kitchen window had the nicest outlook of all—across a small grassy court to a gorgeous German restaurant's windows. You could watch the well-dressed diners coming and going, just like a moving picture; the impressive waiters with heads high and hands marvellously supporting great trays; the squally girls of the cabaret singing their squally songs. Evenings, sometimes, we stood there and watched the moving life, and I would think: Well, that's another thing to do, and maybe the squally girls like it. If you were a squally girl, of course, you would like to squall.

I had spent considerably more money than was wise for one with my bank account, so I decided it was time to go down to the Butterick Building and collect from *Everybody's* for my advertising story. I had not sent in my new address, so naturally no check had come. I called Mr. Cosgrave up over the 'phone and asked, Could he use my story?

No, he said, he couldn't. But he was glad I had called up, as he wanted to talk with me about my work. When could I come to the office?

I agreed to call, but in a dead voice—such a well of blackness I had dropped into with that *No*. I hadn't thought the work great, but I had chuckled over it a good deal, and wept some, and paced the floor, and

tramped over miles and miles of roads and hills, and had lived in the lonesomeness for it; and I had thought it read well.

For days I moved about under a cloud, crushed with defeat. At last, however, I came out of it sufficiently to go down to the Butterick Building for the promised call. Mr. Cosgrave's secretary met me. Yes, she said, Mr. Cosgrave would be very glad to see me. She said it so brightly, that I thought: Well, it's nice of them to be so gentle over a turn-down; but after all there is no gentle way to cut off a head; might just as well take an ax and go to it.

Mr. Cosgrave received me most cordially. The nicest thing about him was his low, quiet voice. Some of the biggest men, I find, have the nicest voices. He told me to be seated, then, pulling my manuscript out of the drawer, fastened the wrappings about it and laid it on the desk beside me.

"This isn't an *Everybody's* type of story," he said. "It belongs in the *Saturday Evening Post*. Send it over to Mr. Lorimer in Philadelphia. And now I want to talk with you about your work in general."

I came up out of that well so fast that I was dizzy. When I was actually hearing him again, he was saying something about how he wished I would let him direct my work a little. I seemed filled up with good plot material, and if I would stop writing for publication for a period of three years, and put in the time studying old masters . . .

I knew I could not stop writing for three years. It might be a crime, but I'd write. I might go to jail for it, but I'd write. I'd given up everything else for it. I

couldn't give it up. Besides, I must have the money. I promised to see him again soon, and left, and mailed the story immediately to the *Saturday Evening Post*.

A few days later I received a letter of acceptance. Once more I was blissfully happy: I had a home, I had a friend in the wonderful old actress, there was no disturbing service in the house, and my stories were going over. Yes, I was blissfully happy, for the conditions were all perfect. I could go on now and write and write and write.

In the midst of the singing content came another letter that was exciting. It was from Mr. Edward Bok—he would be in the city in a few days and would like an interview with me at the Belmont. I went in considerable trepidation, but I found Mr. Bok delightful. I had thought of him—perhaps because he edited a woman's magazine—as a silky sort of a man, finicky, effeminate; but, instead, he was rather notably masculine, with his tall, spare, clean-cut figure. I could imagine him hurling a discus, or running a race, or riding a swift horse. And mentally he was quick and keen, catching an idea before it was half expressed. I liked him.

He wanted me to write some special editorial matter as a regular feature of his magazine. He offered me ten cents a word for it. This was by far the largest price I had so far been offered.

"But I shouldn't have my name, Mr. Bok; that's one reason I gave up doing humour on the *News*. This sort of work doesn't help a writer to become known."

"But—ten cents a word . . ."

"And the subjects; I might not have anything to say on them; they might not be my subjects."

"But—ten cents a word . . ."

"And I should have to turn it out regularly, maybe when I had something else in mind; and what I want to do now above everything else is to be a free lance—write just what comes to me and let it fit in where it will."

"But—ten cents a word . . ."

I wonder even yet why ten-cents-a-word won me. I think it didn't. I think I wanted to write for this very courteous gentleman whose manner subtly conveyed the suggestion that he considered himself the fortunate one in finding me—not that I was in any way fortunate to be found; for I accepted the offer, and afterward did my human best for him, always. A paying manner in an editor.

And then another editor came into my life: Mr. William Frederick Bigelow, of *Good Housekeeping.* I was to do special articles for his magazine—things I wanted to write, myself. With Mr. Bigelow, I felt right away that here was a home man with a very sincere interest in mothers and children, and a respecter of the sturdiest American traditions. I knew right away I should love to write for his magazine.

It struck me as funny that every one of the large publications for women had men editors: women assistants, but men at the wheel, steering the women readers of America toward where they thought these women wanted to go, or where they thought they ought to go, or, with editorial ears to the ground, endeavouring to see just where the women were go-

ing, that they might keep step with them. Men controlling the styles—and men scolding about them; men directing our thoughts—and men scolding about where our thoughts were leading us; men in all the pulpits—with all the audiences largely made up of women—and blaming the women for much of the wreckage in homes and marriages. Surely, men had had a rare chance at our forming; for what we were they could take much credit, or blame, according to the way they regarded us.

CHAPTER XLII

Work went swimmingly. I would be up at six, eat alone in the kitchen with its cheerful moving-picture window, then go to my room and settle down immediately to my desk. Only once did I have to explain to the old actress that I must not be disturbed in the forenoon, and this sufficed.

By noon each day I would be written out. If my fingers could have been made to strike another key, they would have, but they couldn't. I would hurry to the kitchen and cook something for lunch, the old actress generally leaving her clippings and joining me, with rapid excited talk, dramatically rehearsing the day's news from all over the world, discussing it in detail, eating, but unconscious of what she was eating. Then she would sail off down the rickety old stairs, cape wings flying, her long dark-blue veil streaming back, fastening her bonnet as she went. I would watch her from my front window, her walk as brisk as that of any girl, graceful, hurrying along, hardly more than touching the earth, deep in some interest of city, or state, or nation, or the world, intent on some activity for the public benefit. Then, presently, I, too, would start out for a long walk.

I prowled about, finding my own New York. The Bowery drew me. I would see the blue-coated policemen going their rounds among the pushcarts and the

babies and the gossiping mothers, and I would think: Perhaps under those blue coats there is another Father Wilbur. You never can be sure from the outside what is going on deep down inside—some new growth or sudden flowering to scatter strange seed in strange places. The wonder to me was that Father Wilbur had known there was an old Oregon country. For no one in New York seemed to know much of anything about the West but just California—hazy about the rest of the coast; hazy, and not interested.

The tea rooms became familiar haunts. After a tramp through narrow, crooked, crowded old streets, among quaint old shops, hunting out odds and ends of interest in shabby old second-hand stores, finding treasures, often, dreaming along the Battery, riding out to the Palisades and tramping along wildish cañon trails, or going out to one of the parks, renting a wobbly old flat-bottomed boat and rowing for several hours—then I would visit one of the tea rooms and have a cup of tea and watch the New Yorkers—and wonder if any of them were. Tea, even in the most elaborate places, such as the Waldorf, the Biltmore, the Plaza—in fact, in all of the large dining centres—was served so delightfully as to be a lure, always, and so reasonably as to be possible to the most limited of incomes. This seemed to me very gracious of these hostelries.

I would sit there all alone, drinking my tea and nibbling my toast and wondering about my neighbours. They mostly seemed to me transplanted, like myself, and awfully happy about it, some way: like people on a trip, and vaguely excited by everything

strange. One day there was such an interesting group gathered about a fair young woman, and then I heard someone speak of her as "the princess." And I thought it's just like the frontier—like Yakima—everybody all mixed up.

But with them all, born New Yorker or adopted, there was no place like New York. One day, when I was buying some crackers in a grocery store, the grocer told me that his daughter had married and gone West, gone to Portland, Oregon. He didn't know how she would ever stand it, a girl used to things as she was—plays and movies and things like that.

"But they have plays and movies in Portland."

He couldn't believe it; just in New York did they have such things.

"And besides, maybe she'll have a dear little bungalow with roses."

Well, she had always been used to an elevator apartment; he didn't know about it . . . pretty hard, going West.

I began to see that, if your life hadn't educated you to things, they didn't mean much to you, not even a bungalow with roses.

I didn't let any of the people whom I had met previously know I was in town, for I was sure I should work better if I held fast to loneliness. Adrift, I saw everyone but no one saw me. And my time was not tied up with promises to go places and do things.

But my way of life worried the old actress: "You're young, honey," she would protest, when I would come in at dinner time. "You ought to be enjoying yourself."

"I am," I would tell her.

"Yes, half killing yourself shut up over work all morning; then just tramping, tramping, tramping all the afternoon so you can work some more the next day. When are you going to play?" She made me think of Clare's mother.

"When I've conquered. Something tells me to keep on this way."

"Well, *I'm* telling you to come on to the theatre with me." She always had complimentary seats, being a veteran of the stage, but she never invited anyone to share them save those who had a genuine love for honest acting. She had her standards, my old lady. Another of her crotchets was that she wouldn't wait a minute for a guest. If the one she had invited was not at the foot of her stairs right on the dot, off she would go alone. Time was too precious to waste. And she wouldn't go a moment late, disturbing people by crowding in, or disturbing the actors. She was consecrated to the stage as some people are to the church, and gave it equal reverence.

Sometimes I went with her, if it was a play I was especially interested in; but more often I would watch her go off alone—watch from my window. I'd think: an old derelict—that's what a casual observer might say—whipping about cold corners in her old cape and veil, dipping her twists of dry bread into her muddy coffee, but a wonderful old aristocrat, really, refusing to sell her platform talent, to sell her opinions; refusing to take anyone to the theatre to occupy her good gift seats who didn't reverence honest acting. I'd watch her out of sight, then I would draw my blinds

and go to bed, for I must sleep long and be rested for the work next day.

The days grew colder. I all but abandoned the kitchen, there being no heat in it save from the gas burners, and frost formed thickly on the water pipes. I wondered how the old actress endured the cold, for she had no heat in her room save such as she could get from burning twists of newspaper. First she read them, then she burned them. I offered to buy her some bags of pitchy kindlings, as she had no place to store larger fuel, but she objected, declaring she really preferred the newspapers.

"When I'm out, my fire's out," she explained. She wanted no responsibilities—not even the responsibility of a fire.

CHAPTER XLIII

It was Christmas Eve, and I had not been aware of its coming, so deeply engrossed had I been in a story that I was eager to have finished before the New Year. All day I had been working on it, making the last copy. I now sat looking at the beautiful white pages, with their wide margins, and good black type, pleased with the mechanics of it, and at the same time filled with that all-gone feeling that sweeps over you with the knowledge that characters you have lived with intimately are now about to go out of your life and consciousness—that lonesome feeling for the children of your brain that will not be yours any more—just everybody's, once they are out in the world. And then, all at once I realized that I had eaten nothing since breakfast. Hurrying into wraps, I crunched through the snow to the nearest restaurant.

Coming abruptly upon the gala atmosphere, I suddenly knew what day it was, and wished I had brought the old actress along, for celebrations meant a great deal to her, holidays being the most important days on the calendar. Revellers were all about, gay little parties, gay big parties, with joyous greetings, and laughter, and the music of Christmas bells.

Memories swept over me—memories of Christmases far back to the earliest days, when there had always been a great to-do in our home over hanging

up stockings, and decorating a tree, and planning presents; and on Christmas Eve a grand scampering of children in white nightgowns, and an air of deep mystery and glad surprise. I couldn't stand it, sitting there all alone. I got up, paid my bill, and hurried out.

The old red-brick house was in darkness, with all the foreigners off celebrating, and cold with the coldness of desertion on a bitter winter night. I ran up the creaking stairs. Poor old house, I thought, what Christmases you must have known back in those beautiful days of your youth. And now—you're just a shell haunted with memories.

The kitchen door stood open, and the moonlight made the frost on the water pipes glisten like frosted velvet. The window was thickly coated with it. But there, crouched down on a footstool, with her face pressed to the pane, was the old actress, breathing on a spot to keep it frost-free so she could see out. She had her shabby black Spanish shawl with its brilliant red roses drawn tightly about her, and her arms hugged to her breast to keep in the warmth. When I slipped down beside her, she lifted her cold little face, and it was wet with tears.

"Look," she said, in her broken voice, turning back to the window. "Look there."

I looked through the tiny clearing to the brilliant restaurant windows and on to a scene such as I had just quitted. Gorgeously dressed diners seated or being seated about gorgeously decorated tables, with gay festoons everywhere—tinsel, and greenery, and bells. It was all overdone, bulgy with Christmas spirit, but

gay. There was music, and the gleam of silver and linen, and imposing white-shirt-fronted men, and glowing-bosomed women, and raised glasses, and smiles and revelry.

"That party of six at the table closest the window, where the big, fine-looking old German is just now lifting his glass to the handsome woman opposite, the one wearing the pearl necklace with the diamond pendant—can you see? Money fairly oozing and all of them celebrating, with food: that man is my second husband."

I slipped down beside her and pulled the shabby old Spanish shawl more snugly about her. Her body seemed made of rope, so hard and muscular, and her hands were like ice. In snuggling close I rubbed her nose, and it was as cold as a puppy's. Then, just as I was expecting her to dissolve into tears, she burst out: "I'd better have roasted the mutton!"

But all at once her slumped figure stiffened and her old gallantry reasserted itself. "Come on," she said, springing up and switching on a light, at the same time mopping her eyes with a hard wet little knot of a handkerchief, "let's go celebrate!"

CHAPTER XLIV

My first *Saturday Evening* Post serial began to appear, announced in red ink right out loud on the cover. I bought a dozen copies and, carrying them home, stood them up all around the room against the walls so I could see one whichever way I looked. Then I called in the old actress to see, and she kissed me, the ready tears of sympathetic joy springing into her eyes.

"Now, honey, you can play," she said in her deep throaty voice. "You've got now where you can stop for a while." She picked up a magazine and loved it a little, finally carrying it off to her room with her. She was wonderfully gifted for sympathetic companionship.

Play, I thought; why, I can't play—I've just finished a story, but I must do another. But all at once I wanted to play: wanted to drop everything and run away with a jolly group, and be foolish, and inconsequential, and say silly things and do silly things. Wanted a horse and to gallop wildly across desert wastes. Wanted a good partner and to dance all night—old-fashioned quadrilles such as we had danced in Yakima, with old-fashioned cow-puncher callers singing out the rhythms—dancing with running, and romping, and laughter in it. Nothing but some good hard playing could cure the wanting. And then, all at once,

I remembered the old actress's seventy-seventh birthday, and the ball she had dreamed of; and I ran into her crazy old room, pushing the screen unceremoniously aside.

She looked up from her blackened cup of coffee and the twist of bread she was dipping into it. "If you come in some day and find me dead, honey, don't let it scare you," she said. "I'll just be lying on the cot, most likely, with my hands crossed, maybe, on my breast; and there in the crack back of the mantel you'll find the funeral money, just where I showed you. I *would* love to be laid away in a Brooklyn vault, if——"

"See here," I broke in, "when does that famous birthday of yours come off? I want to dance!"

"Why, honey, that's what's making me so blue: it's to-night; and no more ball in sight than America has a merchant marine!"

"Then the ball's on," I cried. "It's my party; I've just got to celebrate, too. Come on, let's plan it."

Her eyes began to widen and shine. "It wouldn't be right without just the right man," she said, going into it immediately. "One who dresses well, and dances well, who can do us proud. Let me think. . . ."

She got up and began opening trunks, as if she might find him there. "It must be a grand ball, honey, at Sherry's, or Shanley's, or Churchill's, or Delmonico's. . . ." She was now digging out great gobby wrinkles that were old silk gowns, and satin gowns, and velvet gowns—all old stage costumes—throwing them recklessly on to the floor; then boxes of rare old lace, emptying them, lifting the most exquisite Point

Duchesse in her thin, hard old hands—hands like old ivory. Then a box of jewellery—diamonds and pearls in quaint settings.

We had a wonderful time deciding which costume she should wear, while speculating on the man, bringing up one only to dismiss him for his bandy legs, or because he toed in, or wore an evening suit badly, and another because he had a paunch. As for the dress, we finally settled on a moonlight gray satin, all shimmery with some of the Point Duchesse lace, and the pearls.

"This gown will have to be pressed," I said, stroking it, loving its softness. "And the lace, too."

"Yes. The tailor will do it for me, for my birthday. He's a good fellow—he voted for that last amendment because I asked him to. Now I'll go out and scare up the right man to take us. And you run along, honey, and find a new gown for yourself—something gay and happy that you can put right on."

Leaving the wrinkled gray mass on the floor, breathless with excitement, she pulled her old bonnet and cape off their hooks and started out, her bonnet in her hands. She would put it on as she went. She made me think of some excited child swinging its sunbonnet on its arm as it ran happily along to some treat awaiting it.

When the tailor had pressed the gown and adjusted some ripped places here and there, it truly was a gorgeous sight, with its long train lying out on the floor all edged with little ruffles of old ivory lace, and a low cut neck with the deep lace bertha falling over the shoulders. As for me, I found a golden dress that I could step right into; and the old actress found the

right man, an admirer of a young actress whom she had helped in many ways, and whom she very especially loved. When they heard of the birthday ball, they dropped everything else and entered into it, planning it with a joyous abandon characteristic of the play people. It became their party instead of mine. They would have it no other way.

"He's a handsome boy," she said, telling about it, her voice full of deep throaty chuckles. "I couldn't go out on the floor with a handsomer. And he wears his clothes wonderfully; and as for his *dancing*—well, we'll just be the Castles, that's all."

The breath of rumour had carried the news over the great restaurant, and anyway, we were a scrumptious looking party with our magnificent old lady. As to wearing clothes well, she certainly had the art. She looked like one's dream of a splendid queen as she entered the magnificent restaurant. The young actress had come early and given her a facial, and dressed her hair, and made her look perfectly exquisite.

We were hardly seated before the proprietor came, and bowing low, greeted her. He had heard of the birthday, and now he asked for the first dance. He was magnificent to look upon, too, a big pompous German Emperor sort of a figure, with fierce iron-gray moustaches, and very much gleaming white shirt front. His manner was all deference. He would allow no one to go out on the floor till the old actress had opened the ball.

When they went out together, everyone stopped eating dinner and watched. It was a waltz, and they danced in the old-fashioned way, slow and stately and

dreamy. Her figure was slim and round like a girl's, and she moved like a girl of yesterday. Soon other dancers went out on to the floor, but either out of respect, or because the comparison was too unflattering, they presently sat down again, leaving the floor to the two. It was a real performance.

Such applause when they finished! When the old actress's partner, with a very elaborate manner, returned her to her place at the table, every other gentleman in the room came, begging for a dance. The young actress and I looked at each other with happy eyes: the old lady's "ball" was to be a grand success.

And it was: she danced till two o'clock, and came home in a cab, reluctantly.

"Oh, honey, it's my last ball!" she moaned, when her young friends had gone and she was back once more in her stark cold old room, pulling out of all the elegance. I suddenly knew what the room was like—a dressing room in a theatre. I had never been able to place it before. "But didn't I have a grand birthday, though?" She chuckled and her eyes shone. "I just wonder, now, how many women have danced till two in the morning on their seventy-seventh birthday? And you had a good time, too, didn't you, honey?"

Yes, I had had a good time. And I was thinking, while I helped her undress and put away her treasures, that perhaps nothing was more important to life than that joyous attitude of hers toward it. What a way to grow into the later years, just loving them! She hadn't been wise, maybe; she had recklessly cast away good husbands; and now she was all alone, and nearly

broke, and seldom warm, and scantily fed, and yet how deeply she enjoyed.

I thought, as I pulled out of my own clothes, that one might picture a very human sort of Creator as having set this earth of ours going, and now as standing off watching it, and being pleased with her enjoyment of all He had provided. Just as a hostess who has arranged an evening's entertainment is most pleased with the ones who get the most pleasure out of her many provisions. Surely no other return could be more gratifying.

Yes, it was a great success, the old lady's birthday party; but it whetted my appetite for more. I didn't want to settle down again right away in the silence to the steady pursuit of work. I wanted to go on playing.

CHAPTER XLV

I called up Mary Curtis.

"Well, where have you been?" she demanded. "We all decided you must have gone back West." She invited me to a tea in her studio in Gramercy Park that very day. I accepted. . . . A beautiful cordiality was in the air. I wondered how people could ever have called New York cold or inhospitable. It seemed to me all friendliness and kindliness.

After this there were many teas. Some very formal affairs, with butlers and maids and elaborate tea tables; and some small and intimate and cosy. Young professional women living alone in their pretty studio apartments were quite given to teas. And almost invariably, in the smaller groups, I'd meet someone to whom I felt drawn. "We're having a no-host dinner down in Greenwich Village to-night, half a dozen of us. Won't you come?" one would say as I would be leaving, and I would.

The leader of one such group was a stunning young woman, a lecturer on literature when on duty, who had grown up in the mountains of northern California. Handsome, intense-natured, with a fine mind and a spirit of restlessness, she found an outlet in bringing interesting people together for discussion on all sorts of subjects. She had a passion for social betterment. A conversation on prison improvement was wine to her,

or a talk with an authority on international law. And she was just the jolliest sort of a person, too; but her enjoyment came through these channels, never through grills, or dancing, or clothes. In fact, while she was handsome beyond anyone else I knew, she was utterly unconscious of her personal appearance, wearing whatever an interested saleswoman had put over on her while she was deep in one of her abstractions. Sometimes it was suitable, sometimes not. The men in her group were largely those at the head of live movements for man-improvement on the earth; and through her I met leaders of all kinds. Often, till midnight, I would sit with her and her friends about a table in some ramshackle old Greenwich Village restaurant, deep in some discussion that held us, tense and unaware of time.

Dining clubs came to light. Invitations arrived from I knew not what source. At these clubs all sorts of subjects were discussed, and none. Some were merely nonsense clubs. But each one provided a new vista through which I could see life going on from yet a different angle. Editors, too, were often gracious, taking me to their homes to dine, and to concerts and the opera.

The old actress loved my going places. She always came in as I was getting home, no matter how late the hour, to hear all about the evening, huddled there in her old Spanish shawl on the side of my bed. She loved good times going on all about her. If she could be in them—fine! But if not, then she wanted their atmosphere. My present programme suited her much better than had my closely working days. Youth should

play! Age should play! Who should work, then? Well, she wasn't altogether sure. But she considered that now, at last, I was using life for the purpose for which it was made.

"You're young," she would say. "If you don't form the habit of enjoying yourself now, you never will."

In all those bitter cold months, not a word about wrapping up, or keeping my feet dry, or being careful not to take cold; only, when I got in, that eager, that chokingly eager inquiry: "Did you have a good time? Who was there? What did they talk about?" She must hear it all, all the new stories, all the wit, all the ideas.

And then I met the D——s. It was certainly an angel of light that brought me the D——s —an angel in the shape of a hopeless tubercular who wheezed terribly through his wrecked lungs when he had to walk or move about, but who, when comfortably relaxed in a great armchair before someone's cheerful fire, could spin the most marvellous tales without a particle of effort. Everyone called him "the Colonel," as if there were no other colonel, and truly there wasn't, for the little group that loved to gather around him. He would lounge picturesquely in some deeply cushioned nest of comfort, his black hair tossed back from his pallid face, his large dark eyes shining feverishly, and his white, perfect teeth gleaming as he painted his pictures, gesticulating with slim, sensitive hands that made a picture in your mind all by themselves, so much personality they had. The Colonel's stories were largely of the border, and Mexico, where he had gone at one time to help organize the Mexican army, though he had received his wound and his t. b. germs at San

Juan with the Rough Riders. His life in the army had left him little but these: the germs, and the cough, and the wonderful stories—which he wrote for the magazines when he was able—and his friends, who increased as did his contacts.

The night I met him I was at a very grand dinner party with some lovely Jewish people uptown. He had been so quiet during dinner that no one noticed him in particular, he, like myself, being known only to the hostess. But something about the quality of his silence, the *contained* quality of it, like a volcano that might erupt at any moment, and his resemblance to R. L. S., attracted me. So after dinner I slipped out of the drawing room, where the hostess was having music, and found him across the hall in the study, alone in a great chair before the fire.

There he sat in the semi-darkness, smoking a cigarette and watching the flames, himself the most vivid flame of all, and almost as soon to go out. I sank down on a hassock opposite, and some way we fell into talk. Soon he was deep in one of his stories—an account of his capture, single-handed, of a great boa constrictor off in some outlandish place, the jungle wilds of Africa or Asia or South America. In the dim light you could just see his pale, sensitive face, his eyes shining like coals, his long, slim white hands, the glowing cigarette in one; and he some way brought that great writhing twist of muscle and malice, a living reality, into the room there between us. . . . I was with him in the jungle where he had come upon it, and was outwitting and outchoking it. . . . Tensely I followed the story.

When I knew anything else, the music had stopped and the entire dinner party had collected about the door, fascinated. It was always that way with the Colonel. If a hostess wanted her guests to listen to music, or play cards, or dance, she didn't invite him. Only if some inharmonious person was present, then he wouldn't perform at all, but became most sullen and disagreeable. But men loved him as well as women, and he generally had everything his own way. He was such a gallant dying man, such a fighter. And he swore so abominably. You had to forgive him so much.

On this night, after he had captured and subdued the snake—and all the guests—he wanted to go home.

"Come with me," he said in a low tone, but in that peremptory way he had, while one guest was bringing his fur coat, and another his hat and cane, and still another was ordering his cab. "I feel a damned hemorrhage coming on, and I hate like the devil to be alone in a cab with the bloody thing."

I said all right and went. But on the way the hemorrhage symptoms passed, and he grew quite gay in mood. "Tell the driver to take us to the Bears' Den in Macdougal Alley," he said. "It's early yet—not quite eleven."

Again I said all right, and gave the order. When I turned back to him, he looked at me with a curious expression of amusement and almost tenderness in his eyes, sunk there in his thick furs like some great shell of a man. "Anne, you're refreshing," he said presently, calling me by my name as easily as if he had known me a life time; and from that we were friends. I had a

feeling of having been very delicately honoured, some way. It didn't occur to me to ask what the "Bears' Den" was. As it turned out, it was the home of the D——s: artists, who had taken an old stable in a narrow little alley and remade it into a studio home.

I lifted the brass knocker in the form of a bear, dropped it, and quickly the wide door swung open. When they saw who had come, all the D——s fell on us in an avalanche, all loving us at once, loving me right away, for hadn't their dear Colonel brought me? That was enough. I was in.

There was Daddy D——, famous Indian painter, and Mother D——, a writer of stories for children, and two of the six young D——s, the four younger ones, including the twins, being in bed; and there were all the D——s' intimate friends who chanced to be in town on this particular evening; and the D—— spirit seemed to have radiated to everyone and now out to us, till the whole great old stable was filled with welcomers. Thirty-five or forty guests, perhaps; people from everywhere. For Daddy D——, besides being an artist of note, was an explorer and an adventurer and a lover of the men who made the far places of earth and sea and sky. His friends all dropped in on Sunday evenings when in New York. North Pole and South Pole explorers, flyers, and hunters of big game—bronzed, earnest men right out of action, with its atmosphere still upon them.

Daddy D—— (he had so many children that it became natural to drop into calling him "Daddy" when speaking of him) looked upon all these men as

he might his own children back from their wanderings; but, in fact, he was the biggest child of them all—tender hearted, loving fierce deeds, with a poet's soul and a child's faith. He had been showing his paintings when we interrupted; and he had had to stop and almost carry his dear Colonel to a comfortable seat near the fire, while Mother D—— brought elderberry wine, and one pretty young daughter put a stool under his feet—and another a cushion to his back—all with eyes shining as if a long-lost member of the flock had at last stumbled over the home threshold. I think he had been there the preceding Sunday evening, but, you see, it was growing late, and he had not shown up yet—and he might not have been able to make it, and it was so wonderful that he had.

"When the Sunday nights come and the Colonel doesn't drop in," I heard Daddy D—— say, then stop abruptly, and choke up—just thinking of the time, not so far away, perhaps, when the Colonel would be gone.

The love-filled atmosphere struck me like a warm wave. How they loved their friends, these D——s; how they loved each other; how they loved their work. What a life of affection, and comradeship, and understanding they lived there in the old stable among their paints and putties and manuscripts. So much seems to come out of stables.

When the Colonel was quite comfortable and I was looked after, then Daddy D—— went back to his paintings, telling the story of this one and that one, sketched in the Southwest or the Northwest, or Africa, or South America, weaving in bits of native history as he went along; and I took occasion to look about the

place. Like an old barracks, it was—dark walled and dimly lighted; but showing through the duskiness were details: the spreading antlers of an elk, a great moose head, hunting knives and Indian gear, paintings by Remington, bronzes, Indian pottery—and in one piece of it a bunch of sagebrush that brought its pungent fragrance into the room—a stack of antiquated guns. I learned later that Mrs. D——'s grandfather had been an officer under Napoleon, and she had his gun, while Daddy D—— was a descendant of John Alden and had famous Revolutionary guns in his collection.

Divans and couches and easy chairs were covered with Navajo blankets and buffalo robes and bearskins. In a far corner, a pile of wet clay caught up the light on a sort of model's throne. In another, a desk held manuscripts spread under paper weights.

Oh, it was a great museum of life and adventure and daily work and accomplishment.

When Daddy D—— had finished showing his paintngs, there began a thinning out. As the group narrowed down, and down, and down, with good-nights, and come agains, and "We've had *such* a good time," repeated over and over, those left drew steadily closer together and around the Colonel in his great chair before the open fire. Stefansson, the North Pole explorer, was there, lined and bronzed and with little to say; and Edgar Beecher Bronson of Indian story fame; and Jack Means, a bow-legged cow puncher who had roped lions with Buffalo Jones, and an ambulance driver from the French front, and a one-legged soldier who had last seen the ambulance driver under wet French skies, and had never thought to see him again. And Hilde-

garde Hawthorne, granddaughter of the great Nathaniel—a slim, eager, gay-hearted mortal, busy on stories of old college towns, and but recently returned from vacationing on a Southwestern ranch where she had ridden hundreds of miles exploring old trails. Right away I loved her, for she was so sincere and real. . . . And others I can't remember.

How Daddy D——'s eyes glowed as he looked about on this smaller group, as much as to say, Ah, now the evening has really begun!

The Colonel had smoked many cigarettes; the company was of his liking; he felt in trim.

What was all the talk about? Maybe nothing important. Maybe nothing to repeat. But there, in the dim light, cigars and cigarettes making little glow-lanterns in the duskiness, touches of Reality came out, like ghosts that too much light drives into hiding. A tale of the North Seas, of long, slow waiting among icebergs . . . of battling great waves . . . of the world from thousands of feet in the air . . . of deep dark jungles and their wild life . . . of hunger, and cold, and heat, and mighty effort, and vast slow patience . . . of facing Life in the raw, without gloves . . . of facing Death in the silence of great space . . .

A sense of cessation was in the air: as if every usual thing of our round of life had stopped; as if we had stepped over into another world. . . . What an adventure we were all on—so the thought came to me as I sat there among those lined, bronzed men—all of us sailing away through space on the earth, not knowing where we were headed for, or what we came out

of, or why, or when, or how. Just sailing away on the great adventure of living—and soon it would be over for us all; then Death, an equal adventure. . . . One felt it, some way, there in the dim light by the dying fire, with the dying Colonel, so full of life.

"Come again next Sunday," said Mother D——, as I was leaving with the Colonel. "Come early—in time for dinner; we always have a few in for dinner. Come always, on Sunday evenings."

I left the Colonel at his club—the National Arts, in Gramercy Park—where a porter seemed happy to help him in, and went on to my own apartment.

"You must have had an awfully good time," said the old actress, following like a shadow and tucking me in.

"I did," I said, snuggling down under the downy covers. "I met a wonderful man who can't live long, but he's living all over while he's about it; and a family of artists whose home is in a stable. Just the happiest people!"

"And what about the grand uptown dinner party that you started out for?"

"Oh, I'd forgotten all about it. Why, it was great. The dinner service was of solid gold—a gift to the bride and bridegroom, and they were using it for the first time. The bride just loved it, but the bridegroom said he wished he had its price in cash. This made the bride mad. She likes to have him *be* a money maker but not talk about it. Yes, it was a wonderful dinner party, for you see it was there I met the Colonel, and he took me to the D——s'."

The old actress laughed her funny chuckling laugh

and gave another tuck to my blankets: "Now go to sleep, honey: I'll draw the blinds so the daylight won't waken you. It's coming pretty soon." And she pattered off to her cot again, happy just to know that the good times were keeping up.

CHAPTER XLVI

A few days after this, I had a letter from Mr. Lorimer suggesting that I run over to Philadelphia for a talk about further stories. I didn't want to go: that haunting fear of being a disappointment to an editor. Every time I thought of meeting a new one I remembered how other editors had smiled, as if I wasn't quite the expected thing. The first editor, at Rand, McNally's, had taken me so amusedly. If they would only take my work and leave me out of it, I felt it would be so much better. But I knew I must go. There was no other way.

The weather was bitterly cold, and I had been chilled in one of my long tramps. I wasn't at all well, was aching in all my bones. But I decided to go anyway, so the next morning I took the nine o'clock train for Philadelphia and arrived at about noon.

When I rose to follow the other passengers out, I sat down again, quickly, for knife-like pains shot through my ankle. What was it? Not anything I had ever had before. Again I tried to get up, and again I sat down. As the last passenger's coat tails were disappearing, I was able, through sheer will power, to limp out, and getting into a cab, was driven to the Curtis Publishing Company's building. I conquered the limp sufficiently to get inside and into the elevator, and was shot up many stories to Mr. Lorimer's office.

I must have hidden my suffering, for Mr. Lorimer welcomed me most cordially, seeming to notice nothing out of the way. He asked me to be seated, and never was an invitation accepted more gladly. Once down, the pain left, and I could speak with naturalness. He must not think that anything was wrong, that I was in anyway disqualified. I realize now, of course, that the sensible thing would have been to say frankly: "I have a game ankle to-day, but otherwise I'm all right." But I didn't: I ignored it.

Immediately he began talking of his plans for the magazine and his needs for it. I had the feeling, as I sat listening, that here was a very strong man: vigorous, vital, and steadily alert. That if he hadn't become America's greatest editor in his special field, he would have built great bridges, or tunnelled great mountains, or planned mammoth skyscrapers; he was constructive —a creator, a builder. And he would have built toweringly wherever life placed him. Then, too, I felt in him a great heart.

I knew this last more fully when I learned, some time later, that immediately preceding my call, he had received a telegram telling of his mother's death. But he had sent for me, and I had come, and he would not send me away without an interview. Had I only known this at the time, how the ache in my ankle would have been deadened by the consciousness of the ache in his heart! This is one of the strong things about men—their power, at times, of self-effacement. Self must so often be put aside for the larger good that it becomes, with many, a habit. This training is, I believe, one of the principal things that make men interesting. They

take care of you!" I had warned the old actress to keep my illness a secret, but she hadn't been able to, with Mrs. D——.

That night I was in a wide comfortable bed with all the dear D——s grouped about, the twins perched on the footboard like a pair of perky birds, and everyone telling me things, or feeding me Delaware Bay oysters that slipped down that sore throat, oh, so easily, that I knew I would soon be well. And I was. You can't stay sick in a nest of love. Friendship, warmth, good cheer—I had them all; and talk, and enthusiasm over painting, and modelling, and writing. The second daughter, barely in her teens, had been awarded an international prize for an original design, the subject being "War." She had never had a lesson in modelling, had merely worked away beside her father when his mind turned to clay as a medium. Paints and putties and story-telling were not something apart in this home, something to turn to, but something they lived with. Mrs. D—— was busy on a new Indian story for children, which she read aloud to us; but the stories she told, could they have been put down in her own inimitable style of telling, would have made her famous. Another gifted woman with too many children to find time for complete self-expression in other directions. But she had loved having the children, the youngest two, the twin boys, seeming to her and to the entire family a veritable gift of God.

She seemed to me, as I watched her among them, the perfect madonna—leading them, directing them, enjoying them, amusing them; getting from them in bursts of appreciation, "Oh, Mother, that's wonderful!

Now tell it to Daddy when he comes home!" A tall, handsome, dark-eyed woman with a beautiful, rich, low voice and a perfect choice of words. When with her I couldn't help thinking of the strivings for culture everywhere, and with it all how few strove for this greatest form—the right word, the beautiful expression, the low, mellow voice.

With everything else, she had such a keen sense of humour, such an ability to laugh off troubles, such a lightness in her life. She wasn't tied and grooved into an earth existence—she was more like one flitting through, with a laugh for this difficult situation, a smile for that, and a toss of her head over a disappointment. A burglar got in and stole the silver! Old family silver, but the worst of it was that the children now had no silver spoons with which to eat their breakfast mush! This *was* tragedy. How could they buy new? Paintings didn't always sell readily, and money was forever a problem. Then—a sudden rift of light, and the problem solved and everybody happy. You see, Daddy always brought home a box of candy on Saturday evenings: well, after this, he would merely step into Tiffany's, instead, and buy a silver spoon. All so simple. . . .

Soon I was able to return to my rooms and my work, the lameness gone, and the conviction strengthened that people could be much, much happier than they are on the earth, if only they would laugh more, and cultivate friends instead of possessions.

CHAPTER XLVII

It was Edwin Markham's birthday, April twenty-third, and hundreds of people were to gather to honour him. "Better come," said my handsome California friend.

"I shall be glad to, for he's from my part of the country: he's an Oregonian."

"A Californian," corrected my California friend.

"An Oregonian," I insisted.

"Oh, well, have it your own way. The important thing is that he has *said* something. 'The Man with the Hoe' has been translated into thirty-seven languages, and the number of published copies exceeds that of any poem ever written outside those in the Bible."

"Just the same, he was born in Oregon," I returned stubbornly.

The trouble at the birthday celebration was that nobody else seemed to know he was born in Oregon: Oregon, the producer of poets, but not the developer of them. There was Joaquin Miller, who lived all his early life in Oregon, but had had to go to California to find recognition, later blossoming out as a California poet; and Sam Simpson, the "Poe" of the Northwest, who had never left Oregon, and so had never been known nationally. I recognized Oregon's conservative nature, never beating drums, just living along with a fine quiet sort of appreciation of the best things in life,

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but she did produce poets and she should have the credit. . . . That night, in all the glowing tributes to Edwin Markham, he was referred to as a Californian, as a great American, as the Dean of American poets, but never as an Oregonian.

I stood it as long as I could; then, after the scheduled speeches, an opportunity was given for spontaneous tributes. I nerved myself to it, got up, and asked permission to tell something about Edwin Markham's birthplace: Oregon City, the oldest town in Oregon, with its lovely river, the Willamette, "flowing calmly to the sea," where the music of waterfalls was forever in the air, where great bluffs rose in the background like young mountains. There, from cattle-ranch parents, Edwin Markham first saw the light.

Never before had I tried to make a speech, and now I was so frightened that my knees shook, and I was conscious of using the same words too often, but something forced me to speak up for Oregon. Oregon —a part of that old Oregon country that my great-grandfather had helped to explore.

When I sat down, there came swift applause, a sort of surprised applause. Then Edwin Markham rose, his coal-black eyes shining, his snow-white hair making a halo about his head. So beautiful he was, so a spirit, his spirit so much more astoundingly alive than his body, that it flashed in right there that only density of mind could look on him and fail to see that man is immortal.

Yes, he said, he was born in Oregon, in Oregon City, leaving there when he was but three years old. But he had carried away a memory picture of being lifted by

his mother to look into the casket where lay the body of John McLoughlin, Hudson Bay factor and friend to American pioneers, those first comers into the Northwest nearly half a century after Lewis and Clark. A saint of the old Oregon country, this John McLoughlin, a man who knew all countries as his country and all men as his brothers. A good face for a baby to look upon—a baby who, half a century later, was to sound a note of brotherhood for man heard round the world. It seemed to me things were magically linked up, torches handed on. Chance, is there chance anywhere?

But the younger poets present were not to leave it all to seriousness and sentiment and a touch of mysticism. Wit broke loose. They understood now, they said, the enigma of Edwin Markham, born "under the bluffs of Oregon City." They played on that unfortunate word "bluffs," and one whispered to me, "You had better have said 'cliffs.'" But, anyway, my speech served to establish the Dean's birthplace in people's minds, and to lighten the close of an evening in which everyone had tried to outdo everyone else in encomiums. And it brought me within the aura of Edwin Markham's great soul.

CHAPTER XLVIII

Once more spring was in the air. The trees in Central Park, now shimmering with pale, delicate, new little baby leaf buds, would soon be heavy with summer foliage.

"Why don't you go to the MacDowell colony up in New Hampshire this summer?" a friend asked. She was going to Europe. Everybody I knew seemed going to Europe, and I had the craving, but I hadn't time. There was still too much to do.

"They might not want me; don't you have to be voted on or something?"

"Recommended," said the friend. "So many ask to go, and they can only take fifteen or twenty, now. They haven't studios enough for more. If you want to go I'll send in a recommendation."

She went on to explain that all the creative arts were represented; that only people who had some worth-while piece of creation on hand were supposed to go; that the colony was designed for serious workers. Also, an important item, it was inexpensive.

It was arranged I never quite knew how, for the list was already full; and I was off on a little wobbly railroad, going up into New Hampshire. There was a change of cars at a junction, and an hour to wait. I decided to spend the hour exploring. It was a funny little old-fashioned town—it seemed to have been there

always—but it hadn't a single magazine stand! And only a few hours from Boston! Funny, but the littlest new towns we had in the "wild West" had magazine stands. I went down a residence street wanting to see what kind of homes people had in a town where they had no magazine stands. A whistle—and my train was gone!

I rushed back to the station, but I couldn't do a thing about it, and not another train till the next day. What should I do? It was too nearly dark for a walk into the country, my baggage had gone on, and I hadn't a thing to read.

Furious about it, I ate dinner at a queer little restaurant, then went to the hotel the agent suggested and got a room. It offered no diversion—not even an outlook that was pleasing or would let me see the clouds. It's marvellous how many hours you can spend just watching the clouds, and what thoughts, wandering vagrantly through the air, can slip into your mind when you are so employed. But I had no clouds.

I began to pace the floor—tense, full of haste, full of impatience with the situation. Time was so precious—I had not a minute to waste, and here I was, just blotting an entire evening out of existence, getting nothing out of it, putting nothing into it, when often and often I wished for an extra evening. Back and forth I paced, furiously. Then, all at once my eyes fell on the one book in the room, a Gideon Bible lying on the dresser. I stopped and picked it up, let it fall open at random; and before my eyes was the line:

> Write all the words I have spoken unto you in a book.

I sat down, the Bible in my hands, my spirit quieted. Why was I hurrying to Peterborough? What had I meant to write when I got there? Some short stories, as nearly as I had a definite plan. Nothing very special. Just life as it had manifested itself through certain human beings. I read the line again: "Write all the words I have spoken unto you in a book." I pondered over it . . . *all the words spoken to me* . . . The words spoken when I was away in the deep quiet, the words spoken when I was off alone on hilltops, the words spoken when I first awoke and lay half dreaming for a few minutes before springing up and getting to work, the words spoken here and there and everywhere when I was alone . . . alone long enough . . . write all these words—"in a book."

I had only played with these words, entertained them as lovely guests, dismissing them, and getting down to work on a good plot, then going back to them sometimes, for refreshment, to relax in their harmony.

"All the words I have spoken unto you. . . ." Of course this command was not addressed to me; it was only a matter of chance that I had opened the old book to it. But wasn't it spoken to me, too? Weren't all arresting words spoken to the one they arrested?

The clock downstairs was striking twelve when I roused out of revery and went to bed. The next day, going on to Peterborough, over and over with the turning of the wheels came the line, "Write all the words . . . Write all the words . . . write all the words . . ."

I felt quiet in my soul. I was glad I had missed the train to Peterborough.

A stage was waiting to carry passengers out to the colony, and there was one other passenger: Parker Fillmore, a short-story writer. He introduced himself. He was a slim, dark-eyed young man, with very black hair, and he wore large thick glasses. We arrived at the colony just before the dinner hour, and there being nobody about but the cook, and our baggage not there, we decided to take a walk and look the situation over. We struck out down a narrow winding road, and, coming to a stony pasture with a hilltop and trees, we sprang over the fence, climbed the little hill, and threw ourselves down under a spreading oak tree.

Such quiet! It seemed as if all the clocks in the world had stopped, and all the wheels had ceased to go round.

"I like it!" I exclaimed, gazing off toward Mount Monadnock.

"So do I," said Parker.

We found we had some of the same editors, knew many of the same people, had dined at the same houses. We felt friendship at once.

"What is that material they use to make little girls' dresses of?" he asked, after a while. He was working on a child's story for grown-ups, and he had been puzzling his brain all the way from New York to find the name of the material he wanted. "No, it isn't organdy—or lawn—or cambric—or chambray—something more dainty, just like a dear little girl."

"Dimity!"

"Dimity! That's it!" His eyes kindled. He'd got his word. I knew just how he felt.

Soon we returned to the house, for it was dinner time. It was an old farmhouse remodelled for colony needs. At dinner I met a number of the guests—notable among them Edward Arlington Robinson. Such a tall, dark man, absent-eyed, deep in his work, scarcely coming out of it to eat dinner. But I liked him immediately. I knew he was real.

The next morning I met Mrs. Edward MacDowell, a high-born spirit, zealous to make the creators' colony —a dream of Edward MacDowell's—come true. But also she was a woman of rare charm and lively good humour, as well as good common sense. She wanted her guests to have every comfort while attempting to write "all the words spoken to them"—in books. To this end she had built little studios everywhere in the deep woods, so each worker could work alone, aloof from all disturbances. Edward MacDowell had had such a studio, a log cabin; and one memorable day she had his old nurse, who was still with her, take several of us to visit it, along the path he had trod, across the little stream, to where it nested deep among the pine trees. Reverently, the old German woman put the key into the lock, turned it, opened the door, and let us step inside. There was the open piano as he had left it, an unfinished score as his hands had laid it down.

Life was a fleeting thing, Death ever at our heels; if we were to write the "things spoken," we must be at it. This was the message that seemed to come out of the stillness of the little deserted cabin—the chrysalis whose spirit had flown.

All sorts of old buildings were in use for studios, there not being enough regular ones to go around, and

part of an old stable was assigned to me. Mrs. MacDowell was apologetic about it, but no apology was needed. The room was large, and it had a wide window that beautifully framed Mount Monadnock. There was a long work table that had been used by a carpenter for his purposes. And I could hear the horses champing and stamping on the other side of the partition. . . . A stable—I liked the idea.

It proved perfect for work. The window gave abundance of light, but about its corners spiders had woven their webs; cruel spiders that caught lovely jewel-winged bees and crippled them and held them prisoners for their purposes. I was disturbed only by this—the spiders' cruelty to the bees. I had to put them out of existence, and this spoiled the beautiful webs that the cruel spider knew so well how to weave.

But through the wide window I could see the stooped farmer going leisurely about his tasks, the growing things that were pushing up through the soil, the butterflies among the blossoms, and I could hear the soft low hum of insects. The smell of new-mown hay filled the air; I felt bathed in a singing sort of quiet.

Immediately after breakfast, we all set out for our studios. At noon, a basket of lunch was brought—always something warm and delicious—and set on each doorstep; the driver merely placing it there and driving on without a word.

The summer days opened out blissfully, in one long, unending bolt of time, with very little break in cutting off the yard lengths. It was so quiet, so restful, and so orderly—the system by which physical needs were met—that I knew only my work. Each morning, when I

reached the studio and had closed myself in, I had the feeling of not having left it, of having been there all the time. No one ever called, and what was better still, I knew no one ever would call. There was an entire absence of strain, of that awful haunting fear that now the telephone is going to ring, now the door bell. It was as if I had sailed away on a charmed sea that had no breakers, and no shores and no ports of entry. A sea that went on and on forever into the sunrise of life, into the sunset of Eternity. . . .

In the evening there was dinner at the "Lower House," and there were mild social activities. Sunday there was church service in a small village chapel, and in the afternoon tea with Mrs. MacDowell at her home on the hilltop. Other afternoons there were long tramps over the country or through the stony pastures. One day a group of us climbed Mount Monadnock. There were rehearsals for the annual pageant, and then the pageant, with guests motoring to attend from all the towns all around in every direction. But all these things were for me purely incidental. The great, the outstanding thing was that unending sea of time on which I was afloat—alone.

I went to work at once on the short stories. I had planned them, and I had to get them out of the way. I have never been able to start a thing without finishing it. It seems abortive, gives a sense of failure to the main stream of living. And so I took up the short stories, though plans for another kind of work were already beginning to engross me.

Each of these short stories was later accepted and published, one bringing an enthusiastic letter from a

London playwright asking permission to make it into a one-act play, which was done. When presented, some months later, it received quite glowing press notices, and a long list of celebrities was given as in attendance, the list including many Sirs, and Ladies, and Barons, and Baronesses. I was suddenly reminded of my old friend Dottie, and looked for her name, for I had heard that she had come into her English inheritance and was now Lady So-and-So, and a very splendid young lady, as well, forever doing generous-hearted, impulsive things. I didn't find her name. But I hoped she was there, or would be at another presentation, and would recognize, in the story, our old gardener and his dear little Scottish wife, for I had used them for models. Dottie, I knew, would remember.

Dear Dottie, it set me to thinking about her, and how her mother had worried, in those dear hard-riding days, for fear Dottie never would grow out of her headstrong, hearty, glorious youth, into staidness, and dignity, and poise suitable to her station; those dear days when we had gone tearing over the plains and through the sagebrush like young Indians. It came to me that mothers could well afford to drop a lot of their worry about daughters, that they trusted too little to blood, and ancestral slant, and background; that daughters couldn't change from the stream of their blood's flowing all so suddenly, and entirely; they would, in the end, be much as those who had gone before them had been. But then, of course, Dottie's mother had eloped, for love, and perhaps she wanted to save her child from ever doing anything reckless that would deprive her of that English life

she herself so much missed. But Dottie—wouldn't she herself rather have had the more democratic programme? I wondered. . . .

The summer passed, and all the growing things turned to fruitage, being harvested along with our stories, and songs, and scores, and canvases; and it was town once more.

The old actress had had a wonderful summer, street speaking. There were a number of things going on in the world of which she didn't approve, and she had taken up the cudgels against them. "And always," she said, telling me of her fine summer, "you can take a ferry at night and ride back and forth across the river for hours. Just be friendly with the porter and he won't even make you get off and pay your three cents to get back on again. I never can see why anyone wants to leave New York in the summer. It's just the time to be here."

The fat Austrian furrier, and the dark Jewish tailor, and the Greek restaurant man in the basement all smiled on me and welcomed me back. But, oh, the city streets! I longed to put my feet again on little needly trails, to feel the soft earth under moccasins, to follow along a road that wound and wound. . . .

CHAPTER XLIX

But before I was really unpacked, the postman handed me a letter from the D——s, saying they would return next day from their summer home in Connecticut, and would I meet them at Grand Central Station. Would I!

And there they all were once more, tumbling off the train all together, each one loaded down, but with shining faces, so everjoyed to be back. They were the most exultant family, so very glad that God gave friends as well as art. So eager to hear about everyone —and had I seen the Colonel? And how was his cough? And had I seen this one, and this one, and this one? I hadn't seen any of the old crowd? And had been in town all of twenty-four hours? It was incredible! Well, they'd call everyone in for Sunday evening. Tell everyone I saw. And come early—for dinner.

And all the time we were moving toward the taxicab I had engaged, like an animated beehive on the march: Daddy D—— perspiring under a huge roll of canvases; Mother D—— with a satchel filled with Daddy's bronzes; the three girls with great suitcases bulging with summer clothes; one of the little boys with his airedale on a leash; another with his arms full of heirloom rifles that might have been stolen had they left them in the old stable-studio, and the youngest twin

bringing up the procession with a huge old-fashioned ice-cream freezer as tall as himself.

"The twinnies thought if they could only get the freezer into town, they could have ice cream every day, as they did in the country," Mother D—— explained, "and as they were so insistent about it, I just let them bring it along. You never can tell; they may be right. Just having the freezer handy *may* produce the ice cream."

We had reached the taxicab. The driver gave one look and snorted, "What you need's a *van,*" and disappeared.

"Well!" exclaimed Mother D—— indignantly. "Just for that we won't take a taxicab at all. We'll go have lunch at an Automat instead. I promised the twinnies they should. They love to drop in the nickels." Turning to collect her family, she burst into laughter, and we all looked. There sat the youngest twin, perched like a little Chinese god on his ice-cream freezer, calmly awaiting developments. "Just see how right he was," exclaimed his mother, "the only one now who's got a seat!"

Daddy D—— was agreeable to the Automat plan; and travelling on once more, we were soon across Fifth Avenue. We reached the Automat, stacked the paraphernalia, Daddy changed bills into nickels, gave each one a handful, and away all the youngsters scampered, looking like funny little gnomes out of a German forest, in their khaki clothes and with all their eagerness. When the twinnies had returned to our table twice with apple pie and ice cream, their mother called a halt, and took a hand in ordering their lunch.

If it was a treat to the children, it certainly was to the other patrons who came hurrying in from desks and counters to drop their nickels, grab a dish, and bolt and run again. They all had time for a glance at the D—— party, a smile, and a look almost of wistfulness. They were such pretty curly-headed children, so delicately beautiful, like little models of designs for fountains expressing youth; and there was such a fulfilled look about the entire family. You couldn't miss it, not even if you were a gulp-and-run body who must get back into a cage as quickly as ever he could.

In some way, they all got back to the Bears' Den; and soon it was as if none of us had been away at all.

CHAPTER L

"Why don't you get you an old ladies' home of your own?" my handsome California friend asked one day, her way of designating her club. "It's a convenience for your mail when you are out of town, and for putting up guests, and then we'd have another place to dine."

Every professional woman I knew had her club. And in this small group that had the dining-together habit, each had a different one, which made variety. My California friend's was the University Club—gray walled and austere as to building, but with an enchanting roof-garden, and excellent dinners at most reasonable rates. I had been invited to join several, but I had rather feared membership in a club: you might be put on a committee, or asked to hold office, or something that would tie up time. Now, however, feeling that it was up to me, I accepted the suggestion and joined two: the Pen and Brush, and the MacDowell Club; and while I was in the mood, I joined the Authors' League of America.

All three added pleasures to life. But the Pen and Brush, because of its accessibility, its many informal shop talks, and its wonderful president, Ida Tarbell, became a second home to me. It was lovely to drop in for tea after a long walk, for always there were others having tea whom it was a pleasure to meet: broad-

minded women with the world view, who had travelled everywhere, told good stories, and created a lively atmosphere.

Sunday mornings, with others of our dining group who were devoted to him, I generally went down to the Church of the Ascension to hear Dr. Percy Stickney Grant. Always he had something fine and inspiring to give.

And so the winter wore on—packed so tight, so tight.

"Come for Christmas!" boomed Edwin Markham. I had met him on the street, the bitter wind flapping his coat tails and tearing at his wide black hat, his shabby old travelling bag bursting with papers and books and manuscripts and collars and socks and handkerchiefs. He was on his way home from giving a series of lectures somewhere on poetry, as full of enthusiasm as some revivalist with his mourner's bench packed. "Come early," he boomed on, grabbing at his hat. "Come and get the feel of life on Staten Island!" And away he went to catch his car.

And so I had Christmas with the Markhams in their rambling old book-lined house. I had gone out with my California friend: a trip on the subway, then a ferry across the bay, then a wobbly little suburban street car, then several blocks through the snow, buffeting the wind—and we were there.

I wondered, as guests came, and came, and came, throughout the afternoon, how many he had invited in that impulsive, great-hearted way—just meeting them on the street and being reminded that it was to be Christmas Day soon, and saying, "Come." You could

not, some way, picture the Markhams having got together and saying, "We will have this one"; "We shall have to leave that one out"; "There won't be room for that other," planning it, with system.

There were poets, and critics, and novelists, and musicians, and philosophers, and students of life, and lovers of life. And there were gay-minded people who mostly played. And in their midst Edwin Markham was as some boy on a playground, but a generous-hearted boy, wanting all the other little boys to get in the game and play hard and have a good time; and he didn't care in the least who was "it."

How Mrs. Markham managed the dinner, when at last they decided that all who were counting on dinner that day at the Markhams' had arrived, I don't quite know; but she did, for all were seated. The long table had been added to, and added to, and added to, all the smaller tables in the house having been requisitioned, and last of all the sewing machine with its leaf lifted. We all sat down together, our sparkling-eyed host at the head.

The first great turkey came on. . . .

Edwin Markham was supposed to carve, and he did —in time.

But the moment he would get the fork adjusted and the shining steel blade lifted ready to sink into the breast of a bird, someone would say something about literature, or poetry, or some writer, with which he took issue, and down would go the knife, and down would go the fork, and up would spring our host to seize a volume from the rows upon rows of books that lined the walls, to turn the leaves hastily, to find his

reference, and to read aloud until Mrs. Markham would gently observe:

"Papa, hadn't you better carve the turkey?"

"That's so, that's so—here's turkey!" he would exclaim, as if only now realizing the fact, and begin again to carve.

But the talk was provocative, and he would hardly be started before again he must stop to gesticulate with the carving knife, dangerously shaking dressing free, as he made his point; or to throw down the implements and again seek some volume that proved, or upheld, or shed light. Zestful debate went back and forth across that bird being so recklessly denuded; but at last, with the help of the able "butlers"—his son and his brother-in-law—everyone was served.

All the evening we sat there, eating, talking, being read to—now a good story, now a bit of interesting literary gossip, now news of someone's finished book, now discussion of the earlier poets, and now of the later ones, now prophecy, now retrospect, now some guest getting up and pacing the floor as he talked, then coming back to the table again, now fresh coffee from the kitchen. The mental feast predominating, but accompanied steadily by a little more of this, and this, and this. The kitchen seemed well stocked.

At last—when it was all but a new day—we were once more crunching our way by glittering starlight through the snow to the "owl" car, to the ferry, to the subway—back to homes and beds, an unforgettable Christmas added to the days that were now among the sacred memories.

CHAPTER LI

Work piled up and piled up: I could not make headway. I would decline an engagement for to-day, but accept it for next Thursday, Thursday being so far away and seeming so free; but when Thursday came, I could have cried for my time. Why had I treated Thursday so? It was wicked on one day that I was already in, and using to the full, to reach out into other days, not yet born, not there to protest, and take great chunks of time out of them. Thursday would undoubtedly be an important day in itself, with its own messages to be received and delivered. What right had I to borrow from it, or to load it with things that might not fit into its programme?

I made huge resolves. "I'll never be on this earth again," I felt like screaming out at each fresh suggestion of something interesting to do. "I can't take time for all these things!" And then, just once more, I would trot along to dinner, or studio party, probably winding up with a talkfest that became too intense and lasted too late to begin writing very early the next morning. The world called, and I listened, but all the time the other tugged, and tugged, and tugged.

My calendar was all written up with: "Call up Sally"; "Find out about the Colonel"; "Go to Greenwich Village"; "Meet at the University Club"; "Buy

toys for the D—— twins"; "See Mary"; "Go to Poetry Society meeting"; "Hear original compositions at MacDowell Club"; "Boston Symphony"; "Philharmonic"; "Reception to Princess T—— at Pen and Brush"; . . . and the drawer devoted to jottings yielded titles, phrases, sentences, outlines, names, and thoughts jotted down on the back of gas bills and laundry slips, grocery lists and theatre programmes: one grand conglomerate of a winter in New York.

In our little groups we lost some and gained some. 'Women always marry in the slump," said pretty Rena, an ambitious artist, with her chin in the air, and straightway married, and we saw her no more.

The Colonel grew weaker and weaker, with dear Daddy D—— like a watchdog at his door every minute. And then he rallied, and with the young D—— girls I would go to see him, to read to him, to carry him the news. He always wanted to see us, and would be furious if we didn't come; but he was frightfully nervous, especially when there was so much to tell him that we all got to talking at once. "One at a time! One at a time! For God's sake, one at a time! How the devil can I hear you when you all talk together?" He would scream at us.

Then the doctor told us to stay away because of the germs, and we all went about, sorrowful, and thought the end was coming soon. But, surprising everyone, he was back again one day at the D—— fireside, swearing abominably, but not making anyone mad, for it was the Colonel, and all his sins were forgiven him.

And then, once more, Central Park began to turn its exquisite pale yellowish green. And one day I ran

jubilantly into the old actress's room: "Summer's coming," I said. "Time for the country again."

"Yes, honey, of course you'll be running away. I never saw such a girl: with the first whiff of spring—you're off."

"And I might as well go at once and settle down to work without more delay."

She thought maybe that was a first-class idea, as long as I just must work.

And so I was soon out once more among the growing things. I had chosen Woodstock, this time, a little foothill town in the Catskills where the New York Art Students' League had a summer school. I was sure I would like the atmosphere of painters—anyway, I wanted to live among them for a while. I had painted when in school and had loved it.

It was a cunning little town, off the railroad, and now all greening over with new summer growth. Country roads and wayside paths wound up and over hilltops. Already students were busy in the pastures, leaving paint rags along their trails to distress family milk cows. I found a comfortable place to board, an old-fashioned country home where everything was put on the table at once and you were told to help yourself. The food was wholesome and plentiful.

Each morning, the moment breakfast was over, the art students were away, scattering over the hills. They would come in with their wet sketches, sunburned, and dusty, and happy—some shocking the natives by going stockingless—in time for a big noon dinner; and afterward they would strike off once more, some to paint through the long afternoon, others to swim in the little

stream that ran through the pasture near the house. Industrious workers, and generous to a fault with each other, conceding merit, making suggestions, always full of good-will. I wondered if being landscape painters hadn't much to do with their sincere attitude of friendliness toward one another's work. It's difficult to maintain an attitude of pettiness out of doors.

I resumed my old routine: work in the morning, a hike in the afternoon. Following a road one day a mile or so up the hill, I came upon what appeared at first to be a great country estate, covering the entire mountain side. There were cunning little rustic houses tucked away here and there among the trees—guest houses, I supposed. But that night at the boarding house I found out that it was "Byrdcliffe," an art colony where artists of every persuasion came from all parts of the world to write or paint or model or compose.

The next day I went up the hill again, and this time I called on Mr. Ralph Radcliffe Whitehead, the English-born gentleman who had established the place as his contribution to art. There were paying guests, I found, and as with the MacDowell colony, they were chosen from the many making application. Mr. Whitehead accepted me, and I moved in.

I was installed in a small guest house called "The Bottega," Italian for "workshop," unpainted, of harmonious lines, with many windows and little furniture. When my trunk was unpacked, my typewriter in its place, a stack of white paper beside it, I sat back in my desk chair in perfect contentment. Whatever else the world might have to offer, for me nothing in it could compare with this: a quiet roomy space in the country,

with large tables for work, many windows opening on to green trees and greener hills, soft breezes stirring all fragrant with new growth, the earthy smell of freshly turned soil, and bird notes the only sound. For neighbours—out of call—other creative people, each bent on crystallizing a dream.

I had stepped off the merry-go-round; almost it was as if the merry-go-round had stopped and the whistles ceased to blow. I thought, this is the one way for me to live; and I have never changed my mind.

A delightful thing about the colony life was that while one's working hours were held inviolable, when the day's grist had been ground, there was the possibility of congenial companionship. And there were tennis courts, a large library, a social hall for dancing or cards or talk. But nothing of a social nature pushed in on your time, nothing was planned, or programmed, or scheduled; it was all spontaneous. The dinner hour, when we all gathered in form our various modes of recreation, was a perpetual "party," for we formed into congenial groups, and the table talk was generally lively. And there was no dress problem: a sort of middy-blouse costume was worn by the women, as a rule, though each one was free to do as she chose in the matter, there being no compulsion anywhere. Many of the women made their own of unbleached muslin bought at the village store, and decorated with a bit of hand work, or dyed. There was really nothing to do about clothes but to gather them up for the laundryman.

After working all the morning, I would prowl about. I found an out-of-doors pottery where elderly, white-

haired women were busy modelling vases, and bowls, and jugs, and jars, using the potter's wheel and potter's clay as potters have done from time immemorial. There were several children from the village, and some from the colony, intent on modelling cups and saucers and other simple pieces; children in love with their work, for, if they didn't love it, they dropped out. Other groups were designing jewellery. I found still others experimenting with colour, mixing dyes in great dye pots. Weavers at their looms, making delicate scarves and exquisite rugs and hangings. And from farther away in the woods came the strains of a violin, the notes of a piano.

Every art, almost, was there; and workers everywhere working for the love of it. Space, quiet, harmony —the perfection of living. . . .

I tramped, and climbed, and played tennis, and found new friends, and was in bed by ten each night so as to be fresh for a new day's work. I tried to make each day balance its own account, with no hang-overs of weariness to be taken on by the next. A long idyllic summer.

But autumn woods will turn red and yellow, and colony-closing time come, and the city loom near, and there's nothing you can do about it. I began to pack when everyone else was packing, and took my turn in the old mountain stagecoach to the train, some miles away; and so back to town.

CHAPTER LII

Three letters were waiting for me; all from publishers wanting to bring out my *Post* stories in book form. The old actress had known I would be home soon and so had not forwarded them.

The letters awed me; they were from representative houses, well known in our home. Their imprint, Papa used to say, stood for quality. A box of books had come to Papa from one of these houses after his going; a magazine published by another had come to our home always, and every year the copies had been bound, so that we children had read back to the beginnings of its life; a magazine the third had published, and that Mamma had always especially loved, had expired after a few years, having failed to win popular approval; but the bound volumes of this magazine were also on our home bookshelves, and we had often been advised to turn to them when wanting something new to read.

Which publisher should I choose?

I took the three letters down to the D——s', and all together we tried to come to a wise decision. We spread them out on the dining table and said "Eenie, menie, minie, mo" over them. Then, to confirm the winner, we put the three names in a hat and had the youngest twin pull one out; but, alas, with a different result. Then I whirled the three envelopes about my

head and let them fall, having decided to take the one that fell face up. They all did.

I went back home and called in the old actress. She thought my way of deciding was probably as good as any other, but wasn't there some regular way to determine who was the most suitable publisher? Perhaps there was, but what was it? She didn't know. I forgot all about the Authors' League, to which I paid dues, and which was supposed to advise one on technical matters of authorship.

"This is the firm that sold Papa his last box of books," I said, finally choosing one. "I'll take this one in memory of Papa."

She thought that a very excellent way to decide.

But now I was in another dilemma, for this publisher had asked me to call at the office. I couldn't call at the office, not till the contract was signed. Nobody better than myself knew what a disappointment I was to a regular bona fide literary person. Hadn't I grown up in a somewhat literary family, and hadn't I always been a disappointment to them, in those old days, when children were stacked up one against another, and their "points" noted? Hadn't I refused to bury myself in books when all the rest of the family were happily so employed? Hadn't my father, on my eighth birthday, held up a book, *A Little Woman*—I have it yet—in one hand and a big round silver dollar in the other, and said that when I had read the one through, I could have the other? Eight years old—a terrible age to have reached without having cultivated a taste for literature. I wanted the dollar terribly—a dollar was a great deal of money when I was eight years old—but,

oh, to read the book through! It came almost too high; but still I had won the dollar.

And then my first publisher, and the atmosphere of amusement over my advent. The publisher's editor—how he had smiled over my having to be a writer, and all so quick. His talk of theory, and plan, and outline, of there being just so many possible plots, and all that sort of thing; his inference that everything must be classified, and tabulated, and come under some "head." Fling about as you might, whatever you wrote had to come under some "department" of literature. It had infuriated me at the time. It was so limiting. It was turning joyous free adventure in life and words into a tiresome rule-of-thumb business. I had rebelled; but, of course, all regular writer folk would say he was right. And I had never taken any "courses," or lectures on writing; I had never read a book that told how to do it. I felt that I would as soon have been taught how to run, or leap, or play.

But publishers, of course, great publishers of wise books, undoubtedly expected this sort of thing of their writers; when you weren't this sort of thing you were on the outside, some way. But if they merely read what I wrote, they might not discover my shortcomings. No, I couldn't afford to meet this publisher. I wrote accepting his offer and saying if he would mail me the contract I would sign it.

The very next day, answering the telephone, I was caught. It was my new publisher. He expressed appreciation of my letter, but wouldn't I please meet him for lunch so we could talk over plans for the book?

I turned to the old actress: "What shall I do? It's

my new publisher wanting me to have lunch with him?"

"Go," she said, promptly. "When you dread doing a thing, do it quick and get it over."

Turning back, I said, Yes, I would meet him for lunch. I hung up the receiver completely wilted. What would I talk with him about? I thought of the catalogue of heavy books that his house published: Archæology, and Egyptology, and Psychic Phenomena. . . . If only Mamma were there! Why did publishers want to meet their writers, anyway? What was the sense of it?

He had suggested, to save time, that I meet him at a well-known restaurant close by. And here a little later I did meet him: a pleasant-mannered gentleman approaching middle age, who remarked as he checked his hat and cane, and turned back to me: "I'm glad you wear feminine-looking clothes. I can't endure the mannish things so many young women are affecting."

I came to earth; and though I can't recall what we did talk about, I do remember that it hadn't a thing to do with great tomes solemnly bound. He was amusing, full of funny little stories about people and things all around us, and he had a sort of inner gentleness that was reassuring. I was asking him presently about his father who had established the publishing house, and was told that I could meet him soon, though he was now quite aged, and retired.

And I did meet him later at a small dinner sponsored by the son: a fine old gentleman, quick witted, with many and varied interests. We talked of trees, and country walks, and swimming, and hilltops, and stony

pastures, and great old purple and blue mountains, and wide tawny plains, and funny little lizards, and the way things grow.

And so, as it turned out, I was very happy about my publishers. I loved the old gentleman who carried his years so lightly, his spirit so dominating his body. I found that, after all, he was most interested in the things that most interested me—Life and how best to live it, and Beauty and how best to increase it on the earth, and Achievement and how best to accomplish it. After my visit with him, too, I found myself more aware of the quality in things: in paintings, in old china, in cloisonné jugs and vases, in ancient English silver; things created through devotion and time; things proved by the years; things of quality.

Time—that was the great factor; Time that mellowed things; and Space out of which things came; and Quiet into which they *could* come. Time, Space, Quiet—these were the three great things. Out of all the brewing, it was as though I had distilled only this, and it was enough.

And then a stunning thought broke in. I sprang up from my desk and ran to the old actress with it.

"I'm going home!" I cried out to her. "I can go, now." It had just occurred to me that I could go, that I had conquered enough to turn back. No more schoolroom, no more question of doing something else with my time, no more danger of being sidetracked. I could go now, and I could write, and write, and write. I could begin to write all the words spoken to me—in books. Great tawny plains opened out, and sombre mountains all blue and purple, and long, unending

needly trails, and golden-boled pine trees with the sun flecking through.

"But, honey, with your career just opening up, and your clubs and friends, and everything? Leave it all?" The old actress was aghast.

But the West was calling me; I could talk of nothing else. And she was gallant in the end, the dear old actress, for presently she was saying: "Yes, honey, go home; that's best. Many's the time I've wished I'd stayed in San Francisco; that's where I went with my first husband. A wonderful city, a wonderful country, all that coast; all new yet, all future; the place for young people. But, oh, my dear, I'll never know security again!"

But things turned out happily for her, after all, for the young actress whom she loved had married the nice young man who wore his clothes so well; and when they heard that I was to leave, they said right away that they would come and take my rooms.

As for me, I was going home!

THE END